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ABSTRACT

The group of case studies details ways in which elementary, middle, and secondary schools in Bradford (England) have responded to recent developments in literacy education and developed whole- school approaches to improving achievement in literacy within multilingual school populations. Case study titles include: "The Literacy Lesson: A Guide" (Ann Winter); "Developing Strategies in the Teaching of Reading" (Carol Satterthwaite); "Developing a Systematic Whole School Approach To Teaching Reading" (Claire Head); "Developing the Literacy Hour" (Barbara Briggs); "Language for Learning" (Tracy McNally); "The Highfield Parent Partnership Project" (Jules Offord); "A Whole School Approach To Reading for Information" (Dorrie Brown, Gwyn Timbers); "Developing a Spelling Policy" (Su Halliday); "Bilingual Poetry Project" (Alex Fellowes); "Developing a Family Literacy Scheme" (Pam Khan); "Assessing and Improving 'Total Communication'" (Zahida Alam, Gill Benzinski); "'Miss, They Might Be Stars!'" (Sharon Hogan, Farhat Aziz, Shelly Fingret, Claire Ackroyd); "Improving Oracy" (Yasmin Ali, Karen Westcott); and "Understanding and Writing Non-Fiction Texts" (Pauline Mitchell). (MSE)

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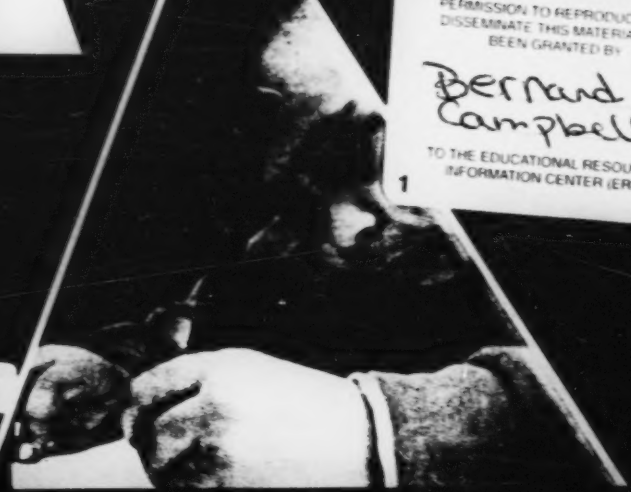
ED 421 865

Lessons in Literacy

Case Studies of Successful Strategies for Raising Achievement in Multilingual Schools



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Lessons in Literacy

Introduction

The National Literacy Strategy aims to improve the teaching of reading and writing and to raise standards of attainment. It is based on evidence that school improvement depends on increased knowledge and understanding of literacy and more effective management of literacy in individual classrooms and schools. The Achievement in Multilingual Schools (AIMS) Project provided schools with the opportunity to respond to recent developments in literacy teaching and to develop whole school approaches to improve attainment in literacy. The 'Lessons in Literacy' demonstrated in these case studies provide detailed accounts of how schools have begun to address the new literacy agenda. They illustrate the successful strategies that have been used in particular classrooms and schools to raise the attainment and achievement of bilingual pupils.

Background

One fifth of Bradford schools, from the whole age range, participated in the AIMS Project. These fifty schools have the highest proportions of bilingual pupils and most have been involved in this GEST funded project for two years. All AIMS Project schools have at least 40% bilingual pupils and many have at least 90%.

The aims of the project were to:

- Improve the teaching of language and literacy.
- Raise attainment in English.
- Improve access to the National Curriculum.

Project Structure

AIMS SCHOOL PROJECT

Each year, in their AIMS project proposal, schools identified their school objectives, their bilingual pupils' language development needs and their staff development needs. Schools received an allocation of supply days to resource their school language development plan. Regular project review days were held to monitor progress, disseminate strategies and evaluate outcomes.

AIMS TRAINING

A popular programme of courses for AIMS project schools included: literacy teaching, oracy, multimedia, non-fiction texts, thinking skills, storytelling, 'First Steps' and specific curriculum areas such as Science, Technology, Music and Maths. An innovative LEA Upper schools training programme involved staff and pupils in applying new literacy teaching and learning strategies. Open University study courses supported teacher action research related to the school AIMS project. Major conferences featured leading international figures in literacy such as David Wray, Jo Phenix, and David Reynolds.

Outcomes

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- The strategy, training and resources provided by this project have successfully improved multilingual schools' focus on language learning objectives. A large number of multilingual schools are now working to common literacy objectives, informed by the high quality training and research provided by LEA and national experts.
- The range of literacy teaching strategies has been extended and improved in many schools.
- Whole school approaches and guidelines for aspects of literacy teaching and learning have been developed.
- Resources have been developed and organised to match new approaches to teaching literacy.

ATTAINMENT IN ENGLISH

- At the beginning of the project all schools performed below the national average in the core subjects in end of key stage tests. Some schools have shown significant improvement in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results. Where there are improvements, schools make clear that the literacy strategies developed through the AIMS Project have made a direct contribution to raising attainment. There is, as yet, insufficient data to make clear judgements about the impact on end of key stage attainment.
- Qualitative data from schools which describes the learning outcomes of particular groups of children demonstrates raised achievement in specific aspects of literacy and language competence. The qualitative analysis of outcomes is an essential aspect of the evaluation of successful strategies for teaching and learning.

ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

- Evaluation of the 'Language for Learning' programmes developed in Upper schools demonstrates that pupils have been able to transfer what they have learnt to subject learning and are able to explain the reading and writing strategies they have acquired.
- In First and Middle schools many AIMS school projects have extended strategies for reading non-fiction text across the curriculum through the use of Big Books, the Literacy Lesson, 'First Steps' and the application of strategies illustrated in David Wray's writing and conference presentation. Nursery schools have developed the use of core stories. A Special school has developed strategies for maximising communication with bilingual pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The successful use of the arts has been a striking and effective element of some project work. Culturally and linguistically relevant art and poetry has stimulated and extended pupils' self expression in speaking and writing.

Key Features of Effective Practice

WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The best schools work on improvements in literacy at a whole school level and use a project framework. The senior management commit themselves to improving an aspect of literacy, develop strategies through in-service training, and pilot work in particular year groups. Plans are based on an analysis of pupil, teacher and school development needs. Development activities are led well by teachers with good specialist knowledge and staff are systematically involved in trying out new methods and systems. Collaborative, action-research methods are used to trial, observe and evaluate teaching and learning. Good guidance, checklists, proformas and the organisation of resources ensure that learning is focused on the agreed objectives and provide support for teaching and assessment. New practices are documented as whole school policy and guidance, to ensure they are implemented both flexibly and consistently, across year groups and eventually the whole school. In a number of schools, Reading Recovery trained staff, working in the role of internal consultant, are having a significant impact on whole school approaches to reading and writing.

Lessons in Literacy

Edited by Bernard Campbell

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

CASE STUDIES

The Literacy Lesson - A Guide
Ann Winter, Barkerend First School

Developing Strategies in the Teaching of Reading
Carol Satterthwaite, Byron First School

Developing a Systematic Whole School Approach to Teaching Reading
Claire Head, Feversham First School

Developing the Literacy Hour
Barbara Briggs, Grange Road First School

Language for Learning
Tracy McNally, Grange Upper School

The Highfield Parent Partnership Project
Jules Offord, Highfield Middle School

A Whole School Approach to Reading for Information
Dorrie Brown and Gwyn Timbers, Manningham Middle School

Developing a Spelling Policy
Su Halliday, Newby First School

Bilingual Poetry Project
Alex Fellowes, Scotchman Middle School

Developing a Family Literacy Scheme
Pam Khan, Waverley Middle School

Assessing and Improving 'Total Communication'
Zahida Alam and Gill Benzinski, Wedgwood Special School and Community Nursery

'Miss, They Might Be Stars!'
Sharon Hogan, Farhat Aziz and Shelly Fingret, Westbourne First School
Claire Ackroyd, Cartwright Hall Art Gallery

Improving Oracy
Yasmin Ali and Karen Westcott, Whetley First School

Understanding and Writing Non-Fiction Texts
Pauline Mitchell, Whetley Middle School

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These case studies were produced by the Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project.
Copies of the complete set are available from Bradford Education, Flockton House, Flockton Road, Bradford BD4 7RY

BRADFORD year of LITERACY 2007-2008

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'MISS, THEY MIGHT BE STARS!'

SHARON HOGAN, FARHAT AZIZ AND SHELLY FINGRET, WESTBOURNE FIRST SCHOOL
CLAIRE ACKROYD, CARTWRIGHT HALL ART GALLERY

AIM *To develop bilingual children's use of language, through original works of art.*

'Time Image 2' by Arpana Caur

Background

Westbourne First School has always placed great value on the art curriculum:

'Westbourne has a commitment to the appreciation and development of the arts, regularly invites practising artists into the school, and makes trips to places of artistic interest.'
Art Policy, Westbourne First School, 1993

This commitment to the arts was celebrated in the summer of 1995 when the school held an arts festival, 'A Mirror on Manningham', in conjunction with Bradford Festival. At the same time the school started a one year combined project with Cartwright Hall Art Gallery on developing the language skills of bilingual children through engaging with original works of art. This enabled the school to promote the arts and to focus on the basic skills of speaking and listening. The school already had strong links with Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, which is a rich local resource, with a strong education team. The original works of art were selected from its collections.

The school project staff included three teachers, each representing an age range, who worked alongside the Advisory Teacher from Cartwright Hall. Project staff worked initially with small groups of children and then with whole class groups, incorporating the work into medium term planning. In this way it was possible to develop strategies and then test and use the findings in a class situation. What evolved was a structured approach to developing the children's language skills through critical studies in the art curriculum. What follows is a record of the project highlighting key strategies and outcomes.

Objectives

- To develop a structure for teachers and pupils to use when responding to and evaluating works of art.
- To explore the ways of extending and reinforcing language after the initial input with the work of art.
- To value the interactions of language and literacy, with visual literacy.
- To find effective ways of using both European and Asian works of art from the collections of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums.

An Image of Time - Early Years, Key Stages 1 and 2

'Time Image 2' was a work which offered opportunities for developing work with different age groups:

Early Years	Colour and pattern.
Key Stage 1	Narrative composition - two figures from different generations.
Key Stage 2	The choices an artist makes between observed and imagined images.

The approach for all year groups was based on Rod Taylor's[1] questioning model of content, form, process and mood which has been used successfully in the gallery for a number of years. *'Engaging with a Work of Art'*, Druncroon Education Art Centre, Wigan[2], is a clear and simple version of this model for teachers new to the idea of initiating discussion from works of art.

Prompt questions: 'Time Image 2'

CONTENT

What can you see in this picture?
Where do you think these two people might be?

FORM

What shapes do you see in the sky?
Why do the figures stand out so clearly?

PROCESS

What have you noticed about the small dots?
What has the artist used to paint this picture?

MOOD

What are the differences between the two people in the painting?
What do their faces tell us about what they are thinking?

Each teacher planned one half day visit to the gallery with their group of eight children. The Advisory Teacher worked alongside each of the teachers so that a common approach to working from works of art could develop. Each of the three groups was engaged in purposeful conversation and discussion for over 20 minutes. Transcripts of conversation were kept and used as poetic extracts in later work and displays.

Sample observations by Early Years children:

The girl is scared
The woman is like a ghost.
She is looking up here. She is looking up here.
Clouds. Up to the sky.
They rain.
The small dots in that picture.
I can count one, two, three, four.
A black stick.

The older children also thought hard about the patterns around the figures. They thought they might be *'flowers'* or *'snow'* and one boy said: *'Miss, they might be stars!'*

Early Years children worked in pairs printing their own pattern on a dupatta (headscarf or shawl), having discussed the repeating pattern in 'Time Image 2' of three dots and a line. In the following sessions children developed print making skills and had a follow up visit to the gallery to view a second piece of work

The Key Stage 1 group role-played stories involving a young person and an older relative (a child and grandparent). They talked about their own

Block printing in pairs.

grandparents and focused on the techniques Arpana Caur had used to make one person old and the other younger. Working on brightly coloured backgrounds they drew a young person and an older person, often themselves and one of their grandparents. The Year 2 children expressed an interest in Arpana Caur and had questions they wanted to ask her. As a follow-up activity they wrote letters to her in India.

The Key Stage 2 children were eager to paint after the gallery visit and had lots of their own ideas. They were encouraged to look at Arpana Caur's bold use of colour and pattern. It became apparent that if they were required to talk to the teacher while they were working it hindered their thought processes. When the work was completed a group discussion took place. Together they identified and discussed the difference between 'observed' and 'imagined', 'real' and 'unreal' in Arpana Caur's work and their own work. With the use of dictionaries, several definitions of 'observe' and 'imagine' were found. They also compared this picture with 'The Boy and the Man' by George Clausen, a late nineteenth century painting with a narrative content contrasting youth and maturity.

Rod Taylor, The Visual Arts in Education, Falmer Press, 1992
Drumcroon Education Art Centre, 2 Parson's Walk, Wigan WN1 1RS

KEY FINDINGS

- A structured discussion centred on one work of art was a very successful vehicle for encouraging speaking and listening.

  Teachers requested help in understanding and implementing the questioning model. They specifically requested examples of useful teacher prompt questions.

- Visiting the gallery and seeing original works of art was in itself inspiring for children. Children responded well to new resources and new contexts.

- Good reproductions of the specific work of art enabled language and art work to be continued back at school. A display of information about the artist provoked pupil interest. The success of these back-up resources led to the development of Project Boxes.

- Children's thought processes were hindered if they were asked to talk about their work while they were making their own art.

- The ideal time to discuss the children's work was after it had been completed. This could be done in a group or whole class context. The children's works became 'originals' in their own right and a plenary gave added status.

Children discussing their work.

Ice Fish - Early Years

The visit to Cartwright Hall.

Children handling ice after looking at 'Ice Fish' by Andy Goldsworthy.

The ground had been covered with snow and ice for two weeks so we decided to focus on Andy Goldsworthy's work of art 'Ice Fish'. Children visited the gallery, looked out for pictures with snow, looked at slabs of ice outdoors, and made their own ice picture using the same shapes, colours and forms. They also talked about each other's work.

Prompt questions: 'Ice Fish'

CONTENT

What can you see?

FORM

What shapes can you see?

PROCESS

When and where might this have been made?

Can you think of any problems?

MOOD

How does this picture make you feel?

SALMA

The following profile of Salma, age 4 years 3 months demonstrates how these activities helped to promote her verbal confidence and vocabulary.

Salma was very quiet in nursery and rarely spoke. After one term in nursery, staff discussed her records with her parents. Her dad revealed that Salma was very chatty and lively at home and was surprised to learn that she was very quiet in nursery. The teacher explained that it was not unusual for children who are chatty at home not to talk in nursery

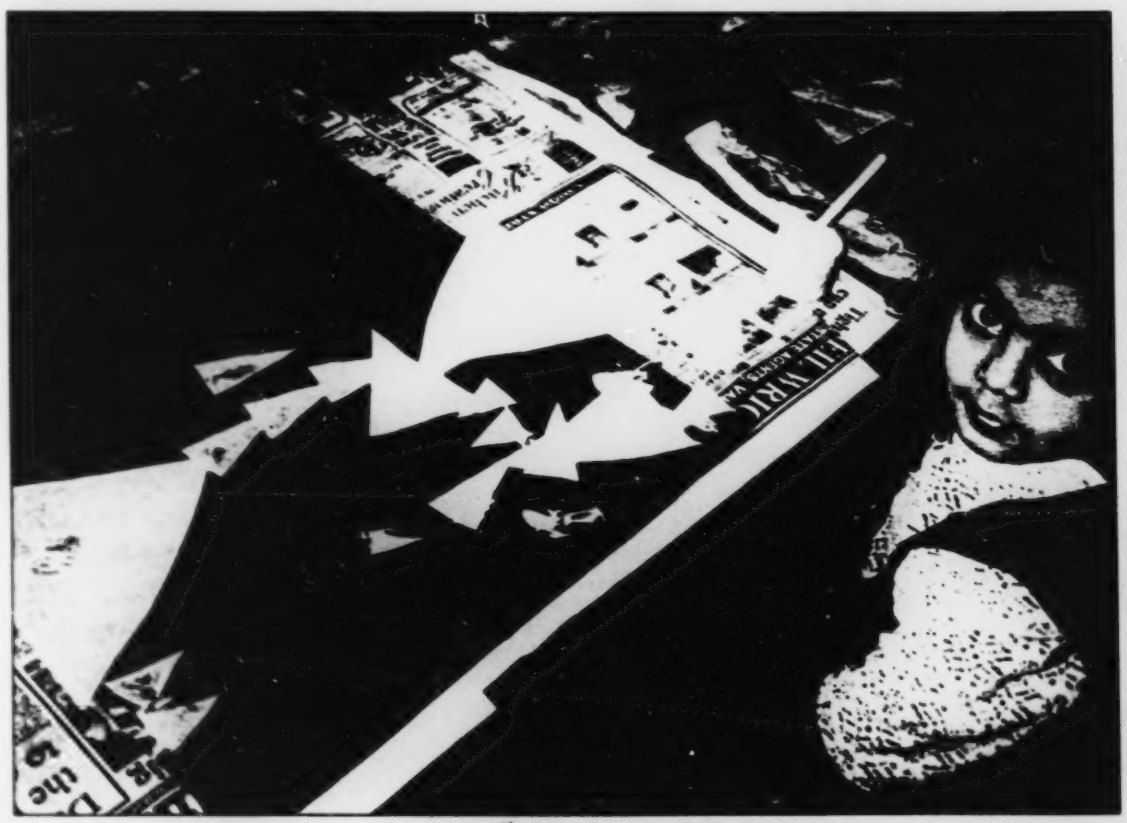
especially when learning a second language, but that staff would be trying to encourage her to speak. Salma was specifically chosen as part of the group of children visiting Cartwright Hall in the hope that it might stimulate her to talk. Salma might also gain confidence from making a trip to the gallery which is in her local park.

At first Salma was very quiet although she obviously enjoyed being out of nursery. When the children were asked to look for paintings with snow in them, Salma was the first child to find one. She pointed frantically trying to attract the adults' attention, and when asked any questions nodded or pointed to the picture. Salma did not contribute to the verbal discussion when we first looked at 'Ice Fish', but she was absorbed during the practical session and to our surprise her work revealed the greatest visual understanding of the work, representing the sequence of shapes in a linear format with an obvious understanding of the importance of size. The next day at nursery the same materials were available for children to work with in the scrap area i.e. triangular shapes of varying sizes, black paper and glue. Salma repeated almost exactly her arrangement of shapes from the previous day. When asked by a bilingual member of staff who had not attended the trip, she told her that she had looked at a picture and done some glueing.

Since this time Salma has been talking spasmodically to different members of staff with increasing regularity, using mother tongue and English. A few weeks later when looking at the photographs from the visit Salma said *'There at park, fish, fish, fish!'*. Salma was the only one of the group to have remembered anything about the title of the work we looked at. Her artwork provides the front cover design for *'Lessons in Literacy'*.

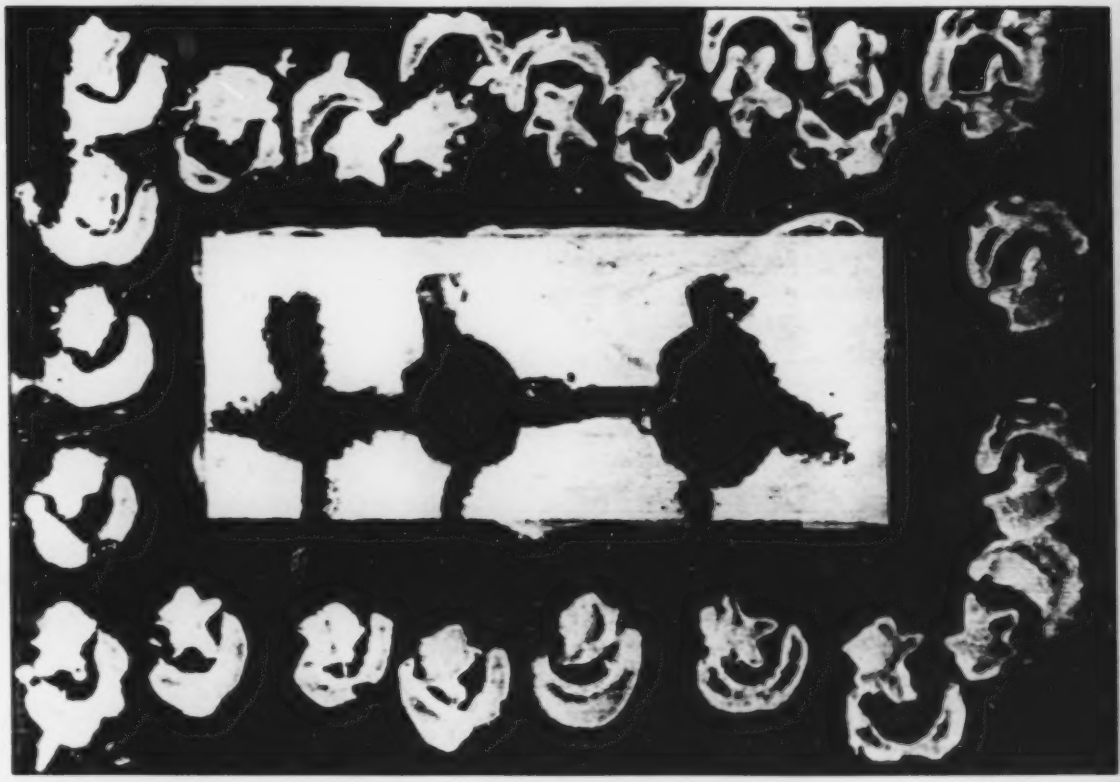
KEY FINDINGS

- Preparation for a visit by using a photograph album of the art gallery increased opportunities for language before, during and after the visit.
- When young children visit the gallery, a task will focus their attention while they explore the new space.
- Where possible, works that are relevant to children's current experiences are more meaningful, in this case it was the cold, icy weather.
- For children who do not talk much in the classroom, a change of environment may stimulate and promote language.



Ice Fish by Salma.

The Tomb Cloth - Key Stage 1



Children's Tomb Cloth

The teacher chose a printed textile tomb cloth from Rajasthan. She could see opportunities for developing the themes of pattern and printing which had begun with working from 'Time Image 2' by Arpana Caur.

The cultural significance of the work meant that children were very interested in its context. After a detailed discussion based on the prompt questions, the children worked in near silence engrossed in their practical work.

Children made plasticine print-blocks of stars or moons. Working in pairs on maroon-coloured paper with a cream paper insert the children printed, painted and drew their own responses to the tomb cloth. In particular, special messages were written and drawn in the centre of their pieces. The children shared ideas as the pieces were completed.

Prompt questions: 'Tomb Cloth'

CONTENT

What can you see?

Can you see some writing?

Have you seen this writing before?

FORM

Where is the writing?

What can you see around the edge?

PROCESS

How do you think the stars were made?

MOOD

What do you think this material might be used for?

Would it be used for a wedding?

KEY FINDINGS

- With the use of structured questioning the teacher was able to confidently lead the discussion about the work of art.
- Structured discussion led to focused, purposeful practical activities.
- Opportunities for reinforcing language were not appropriate whilst the children were engrossed in the practical activity. The resulting art works provided starting points for later discussion.

Using Real Things - Key Stage 1

Vegetables and Lubna Chowdhary's ceramic objects

The teacher of the Key Stage 1 children chose to work with ceramic objects made by Lubna Chowdhary. The two styles of the artist's work are represented in the collections at Cartwright Hall: imaginary pods and fruits and ceramic buildings. In both cases texture, pattern, shape and form predominate as visual elements.

Lubna Chowdhary's delicate work was not suitable for handling so the teacher decided to use vegetables from the local shop. The form, shape and texture echoed Lubna Chowdhary's work.

The session started with a circle time discussion which was already established as a way of promoting listening and co-operative skills. Each vegetables was selected and passed around. The children described the vegetable when, and only when, they held it.

Looking at a Karela

It's the shape of a banana
Like a strawberry (referring to the stalk)
Its a handle
A stick

Large laminated photographs of the artist at work were also used to help the children understand the artist's working processes. We talked about Lubna Chowdhary making vegetables from clay and the different things she pressed into the clay to make patterns. Then it was the children's turn to make vegetables from clay. We started as if we were making a samosa (a familiar process for all the children). We talked about what might be inside, and about the seeds and the stalk. The children made textures with such things as plaster moulds, plastic combs and shells, just like Lubna Chowdhary.

As the practical activity finished, the children returned to the circle to discuss the work they had made.

KEY FINDINGS

- Looking at and handling 3D objects promoted greater confidence in working three dimensionally.
- Circle time was valuable for developing speaking and listening skills.
- A model of practice was emerging: input with discussion, practical work, review and discussion.
- The practical activity gave concrete meaning to the language.

Child drawing in front of a Phulkari

Work with Year 2 and 3 children combined the school's Maths topic on shape with the Art topic on textiles. The artefacts chosen were pieces of embroidered textiles from India called 'Phulkaris'.

Prompt questions: 'Phulkari'

FORM

What shapes can you see?

Do you notice something different in this pattern?

Where can you see a pattern repeating?

PROCESS

How do you think this was made?

How do you think the pattern is kept the same?

MOOD

What do you notice about the colours?

What event could this be used for?

Before the gallery visit the children received input on shape. This knowledge allowed them to talk at length about the pattern and design of the Phulkaris. The children discussed the meaning of the word 'Phulkari' which translates as 'flower work'. The children were interested to find out about the history of Phulkaris and to compare ideas. Following discussion, the children collected shapes and colours from one of the Phulkaris. On returning to school they created their own Phulkari designs.

The artist Bhajan Hunjan was invited to work with the children in school. Bhajan Hunjan is a trilingual artist whose own prints and paintings were inspired by the patterns and colours of Phulkaris. She worked for two days with groups of children designing and printing a collective Phulkari.

The children had retained much of the information they had learned at Cartwright Hall. They were given the task of choosing geometric shapes for the borders of their prints and creating a special shape for the centre. These shapes were cut out from thin card and then mono-printed onto calico. This wall hanging remains a permanent textile resource for the school.

Bhajan Hunjan mono-printing with children

KEY FINDINGS

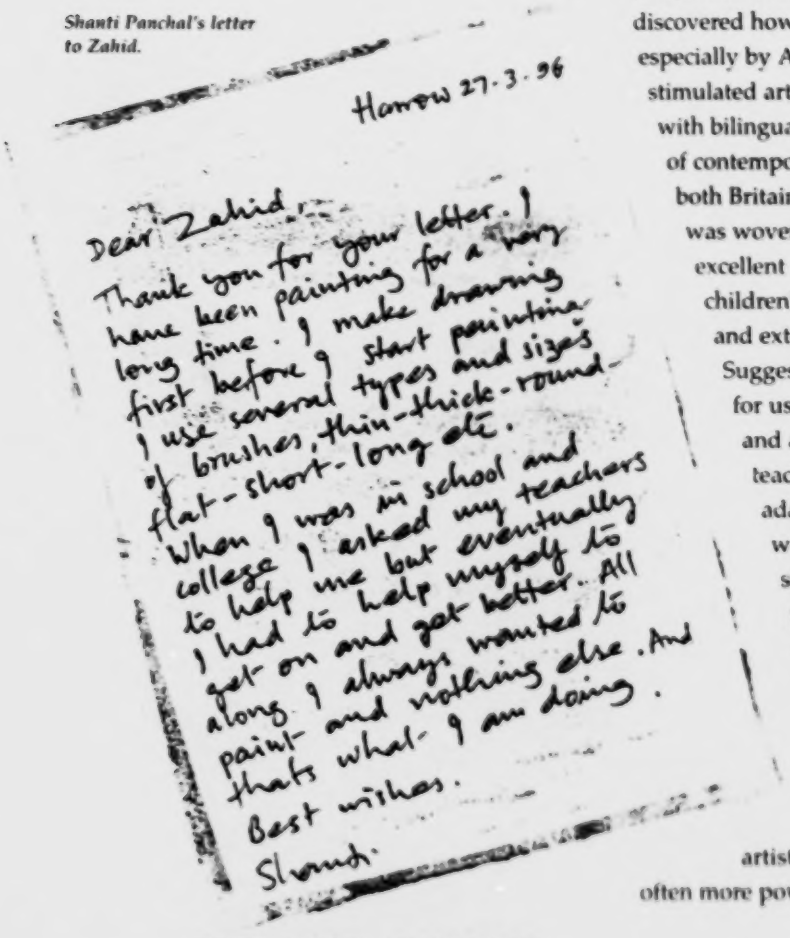
- Discussing and working with an artist highlighted the value of using living artists and original works of art to stimulate language and art work.
- The discussion and practical activity successfully reinforced the Maths skills.
- The school's use of an artist in residence needs to be planned carefully.

Communicating with Artists - Key Stage 2

In order to develop literacy as well as oral language skills, the children wrote letters to two of the living artists focused on, Arpana Caur and Shanti Panchal. This arose from the Advisory Teacher asking the children if there were any questions they would like to ask the artists. Children wrote their own individual letters to the artists and sent them with photographs of their work included.

The replies came slowly but were worth waiting for. The replies enhanced the children's critical appreciation of art, as well as their self-esteem. Arpana Caur wrote a general letter to all the children, and Shanti Panchal wrote individual letters on hand-made paper. These were felt to be gifts of art and the school presented them to the children in frames to treasure.

Shanti Panchal's letter to Zahid.



Harrow 27.3.96

Dear Zahid,

Thank you for your letter. I have been painting for a very long time. I make drawing first before I start painting. I use several types and sizes of brushes, thin-thick-round-flat-short-long etc.

When I was in school and college I asked my teachers to help me but eventually I had to help myself to get on and get better. All along I always wanted to paint and nothing else. And thats what I am doing.

Best wishes.

Shanti.

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The replies from Shanti were shared in a group, and children read and discussed extracts from his letters.

KEY FINDINGS

- The discovery that artists are real people led to purposeful and meaningful extension activities.
- The planned use of literary work can enhance the critical studies aspect of the art curriculum.

Summary

The project developed through successful collaboration between a school and an art gallery prepared to share and learn from one another. Valuable lessons were learned about how to structure discussion and plan practical work to extend pupils' artistic response and maximise their oral contributions. We discovered how the use of artists' work, especially by Asian and British Asian artists, stimulated art work and language activities with bilingual children. The careful selection of contemporary and traditional art from both Britain and the Indian sub-continent was woven together effectively to create excellent opportunities to develop children's critical appreciation of art and extend their use of language. Suggested frameworks for questions for use with children about images and artefacts were a great asset to teachers who could then add to or adapt them. Talking with and writing to artists was very stimulating, and created a powerful purpose for self expression. Reading replies from the artists provided a real thrill and excitement. This has been a memorable project for the children, teachers, gallery staff and artists, not least because images are often more powerful than words.

KEY FINDINGS

OBJECTIVE	KEY FINDINGS
To develop a model for teachers and pupils to use when responding to and evaluating works of art.	• A model of - input and questions - activities - evaluation and discussion provides an effective planning framework. • A structured approach to planning art and oral language enhances pupil's linguistic and artistic responses. • A model for questions gives teachers confidence in promoting discussion. • The model was useful for artists and teachers working together. • Key Stage 1 children need to have practical activities shortly after looking at the work of art. • Key Stage 2 children can cope with a wider range of follow-up activities and gain from comparing and contrasting two works of art.
To explore ways of extending and reinforcing language after the initial input with the work of art.	• Children are able to encounter and understand the meaning of a wide range of new vocabulary through art. • Giving information about the artist promotes a desire for children to produce their own works of art and communicate with the artist. • The opportunity for children to work alongside and communicate with an artist enhances critical study skills and self esteem. • Bilingual staff play an important part in promoting language development, especially for younger children.
To value the interaction between language and literacy, with visual literacy.	• Where children speak the same home language, effective discussion often uses both English and the mother tongue. • Practical work is highly motivating. Children develop a visual language which needs to be valued alongside spoken language. The opportunities for spoken language more often occur after, rather than during, practical work. • Discussion of children's own work is one of the most successful vehicles for promoting language. • Using a circle is an effective way to develop speaking and listening in a group for all levels of children.
To find effective ways of using both European and Asian works of art from the collections of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums.	• Using original works of art can be a successful vehicle for developing speaking and listening. • Culturally significant works of art promote pupils' responses. • Good reproductions enable work to continue and develop back at school. • Asian and British Asian artists can provide powerful role models for British Asian children. • Younger children should be given opportunities to handle objects related to works of art. This promotes their artistic and linguistic responses.

Further details of this project can be found in the CD-ROM ART CONNECTIONS: Cultural Links, Bradford Art Galleries & Museums, 1997.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD CITY OF LITERACY 2003-2005

This case study was edited by Bernard Campbell and is one of a series produced by the Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project.
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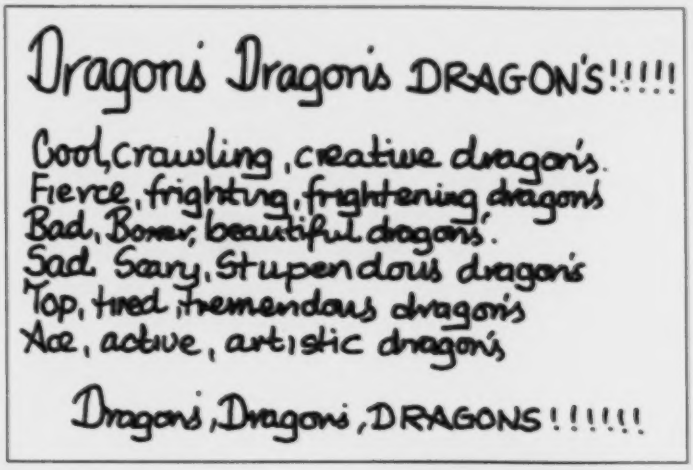
THE LITERACY LESSON - A GUIDE

ANN WINTER, BARKEREND FIRST SCHOOL

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

AIM *To plan and implement a Literacy Lesson.*



Amina Begum. Year 3

What is a Literacy Lesson?

A Literacy Lesson is a period of time in the day when a teacher and the whole class focus upon developing literacy skills through the use of enlarged text and focused follow up activities. It was originally introduced in New Zealand to support children coming out of a Reading Recovery Programme, but has proved to be a successful way to teach all children. The lesson is split into three carefully planned stages with these flexible guides for timing:

- *Introduction* 15 - 20 minutes
- *Activities* 30 - 35 minutes
- *Summary* 10 - 15 minutes

The *Introduction* features whole class teaching about a text using enlarged print. Follow up *Activities* are related to the text and carefully planned to practice the literacy skills and knowledge skills under discussion. While the class are engaged independently on these activities the teacher should have some uninterrupted time to hear individuals or groups of children reading. The *Summary* is a whole class session which draws together the key features of the lesson and outcomes from the activities.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Introduction* is for:

- The teacher to model reading behaviour and point out significant features of text.
- The children to practice reading with the support of an adult in a non threatening situation.

At the beginning a teacher and the whole class may, for example, say the alphabet, read enlarged familiar poems and riddles or reconsider a previous lesson's work. The teacher will then move onto the main focus of the lesson which could be a big book or a teacher-made resource in enlarged text. The text is read aloud by everyone at the same time and aspects of the text are highlighted by the teacher:

- How the text is structured:
  For example, title, author, illustrator, index, contents, characterisation, plot.
- Features of words and sentences:
  For example, new vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling patterns, rhyming words.

These aspects are addressed at different levels to ensure that all children are actively involved. Only one or two aspects are focused on in the follow up activities.

ACTIVITIES

The children need to be organised into reading groups by their ability, but these groups must remain flexible as children progress at different rates. Each group is given a small number of activities to complete during a set period of time. A reading task board may be introduced which will list the activities each group of children are expected to complete. This encourages independence.

A variety of activities provides opportunities for individual and shared responses to the literature. These may involve:

- writing alternative endings
- character reviews
- rewriting stories from another viewpoint
- writing and responding to poetry
- preparing a news report.

Grammatical, phonic or punctuation exercises may also be appropriate. Tape recorders can be used for retelling stories or for listening to stories while following the text. Non-fiction texts are also appropriate for researching a subject and relevant page layouts explored.

If these activities are well introduced, interesting and appropriate for the age of the child the teacher will be free to hear readers without constant interruptions. A teacher can expect to hear at least two groups of children read shared texts during this time.

SUMMARY

The lesson *Summary* is key component of the literacy lesson. It should not be omitted due to teachers running out of time because it is vital if learning is to be consolidated and reviewed. It is a time when the whole class share chosen pieces of work, praise each other and highlight what has been learnt.

How the literacy lesson was introduced into my school

Prior to the literacy lesson, teachers found it difficult to spend quality time actually teaching children to read. I was fortunate to attend a course introducing the literacy lesson, run by Liz Fisher, from the Bradford LEA Language and Literacy Team. This included a video of a teacher running such a lesson and discussion of how to organise activities. I returned to school and decided to have a go myself. Initially it was trialled in a Year 1 class and my own Year 3 class. It was invaluable to have two teachers who could share ideas and discuss concerns. Mutual observations were extremely useful, and provided the support and opportunity to talk about specific issues. Liz Fisher then came in to introduce the literacy lesson to the whole staff at a staff meeting. It has gradually been extended throughout the whole school, but all staff must be allowed to run it in their own way if it is to work for each individual.

It has been decided that the following minimum lengths of time will be spent on the literacy lesson in any given week:

Class Timing of Literacy Lessons	
Nursery	Focus upon a particular text every day. Use a range of literature including big books.
Reception	Initially at least two sessions, leading to at least three sessions by the end of the year. During this time they will focus on one large text carrying out only short activities.
Year 1	At least one session a week. One hour long by the end of the year.
Year 2	Daily sessions of approximately one hour in duration, although this remains flexible.
Years 3 and 4	Daily sessions up to 75 minutes, again this remains flexible.

One piece of literature will be studied over a period of days in each of the above years, to ensure all aspects are considered and developed.

How did we Adapt the Basic Structure of a Literacy Lesson for our School?

It is vital that each school and individual teacher explore different ways of planning and delivering the literacy lesson. There is no one right answer. We decided to focus the Literacy

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Lesson on one genre each half term, for example poetry, myths and legends, traditional stories, fairy stories, modern authors or non-fiction. The Literacy Lesson is not necessarily linked to topic work, although topic work is sometimes incorporated through story and information, for example about the Romans, and comprehension exercises or research may be topic linked.

We plan the Literacy Lessons within age ranges, recognising that all activities must be appropriate and adapted to the needs of the children being taught. Only one or two activities are covered in any one lesson. Teachers and classroom assistants work with at least three groups of children a day between them.

In the Early Years it is a valuable time to share rhymes, repetitive texts and familiar stories. It is a way to model how phonic, context and picture cues can all be used to aid reading. A new letter will still be studied each week and this will be highlighted within the text and through objects collected. Magnetic letters will be used to build new words starting with that letter.

It is important that texts are chosen carefully to highlight specific teaching points. With all ages we use a pointer to highlight the text being read and to ensure the rest of the text is not obscured. We encourage children to express an opinion about the story or non-fiction text.

Resources

The organisation of resources is key to the success of the literacy lesson. Sets of books need to be collated and stored together and follow up work needs to be planned for each text. Initially we used the resources already available within school. We used the big books that we already had and individual teachers made some new enlarged texts themselves. Within my own classroom, collections of poetry were typed and made into multiple copies as books for the children to share and I also made enlarged copies of poems to be read by the whole class. We are now at the stage of having bought multiple copies of a variety of texts and many are supported by big books. The allocation of texts to year groups needs to be decided to avoid repetition.

Why have a Literacy Lesson?

Especially in a school where there many children have English as an additional language, pupils need to see language learning modelled in order to retain information with understanding. As with any learning, children benefit from having the opportunity to repeatedly visit a concept in a non-threatening environment until it is embedded in their own knowledge. The structure of the Literacy Lesson ensures this as a basis for learning.

The Literacy Lesson is helping to deliver our language policy objectives to:

- Foster a love and enjoyment of literature
- Create an environment where children have a desire to read
- Improve reading and writing and oracy skills
- Encourage children to become more independent and responsible for their own learning
- Develop children's responses to a variety of texts
- Develop fluency, expression, accuracy and comprehension skills
- Provide children with a model of different styles of reading and writing
- Ensure children encounter a wide range of texts
- Develop consistency in the teaching of literacy throughout the school.

As a result of introducing the Literacy Lesson, teachers involved have changed key aspects of their teaching:

- When praising the children it is for specific behaviours, making them focus upon their own learning and reading behaviour.
- Expression and fluency are regularly modelled and the children practice with support.
- Punctuation is taught in context and is much more meaningful to the children. They do transfer the learning to other pieces of work.
- Reading is much more meaningful and enjoyable than five or ten constantly interrupted minutes a couple of times a week with a teacher.

In our school the most tangible change has been children's attitude towards reading. They are excited and look forward to the Literacy Lesson. All children experience success in reading and are aware of what they are learning and how they are making progress.

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Improvements in Children's Response:

- Every child now shows enthusiasm for reading
- Children are reading a larger amount of literature every day.
- Children who showed little interest in reading in the past now pick up a book whenever they have a free moment and will read aloud with a partner or silently alone.
- Less able children are now asking each other questions like, 'Who is the author?' or 'Is there a contents page?'
- Children are beginning to work with a higher degree of independence.
- Children actively look for punctuation marks and adapt their reading or intonation appropriately.
- Expression is important to the children and they help each other to develop this skill.
- They enjoy choral reading and explore different ways to develop this independently when practising for a group presentation of a text.
- The children now all enjoy writing both stories and poems and it is noticeable that their work has improved.

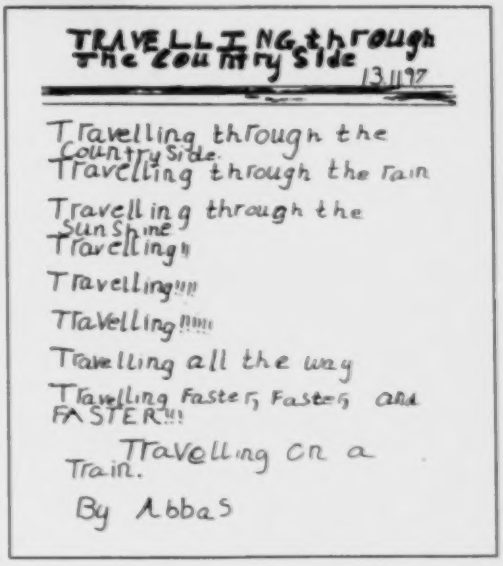
The Next Steps for our School

We are now developing a Literacy Lesson folder with ideas related to given texts. We have also decided to have Key Texts that are to be studied by a given year group to ensure children do have some continuity in their experience of literature across a year group. Displays are to be set up related to books and lots more materials made. The whole staff are to have training in the use of the "First Steps" programme for assessing and teaching reading. A new reading record folder which incorporates assessment sheets for reading, phonics and grammar is also being trialled throughout the school. It encourages teachers to note the strategies a child is using when reading and to consider future development work. We also want to collect further resources and to have some books organised into themes to link to topic work. For this to be possible team planning is vital and resources and ideas must be shared both between year groups and throughout key stages.

Examples of Activities

Here are examples of activities that were used during literacy lessons on the themes of poetry, fiction and non fiction. We also extended children's creative and imaginative response to literature through art and technology activities. Just remember that activities must be manageable and do not try to do too much at any one time since you are focusing upon developing the children's reading skills.

POETRY



TRAVELLING through the Country Side 13.11.97

Travelling through the Country Side.
Travelling through the rain
Travelling through the Sun Shine
Travelling!!
Travelling!!!
Travelling!!!!
Travelling all the way
Travelling Faster, Faster, and FASTER!!!
Travelling on a Train.

By Abbas

- Listen to taped poems and follow the text at the same time.
- Choose a topic and write an adjective, noun, verb poem
  Brown horses running
  Black birds singing
  Soft cats purring
- Choose a subject for a poem then describe what that animal does
  Monkeys
  Eating bananas
  Swinging slowly
  Chattering loudly
- Metaphor poems
  Pine trees in the snow,
  Remind me tall of soldiers guarding
  Then cross out the 'remind me of' and you are left with:
  Pine trees in the snow,
  Tall soldiers guarding
- Noun, verb and adverb poems
  Men shouting angrily,
  Dogs playing happily

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- Plural noun, present tense verb and adverb poems
  Ants act angrily,
  Bears bark boldly
  Go through the alphabet
- Write a descriptive poem following a given style and topic
  I can see the wind.....
  When a kite flies high,
  When daffodils are dancing,
  When my hair blows,
  I can see the wind.
- An adjective syllable poem
  Pirates, pirates, pirates,
  Ace, angry, alien pirates,
  Bold, bearded bilious pirates,
  Cool, cunning, creative pirates,
  Pirates, pirates, PIRATES!
  Again, go through the alphabet

NON-FICTION

- Page layout - represent information with a similar style or structure, or design a new page.
- Activities which involve using the contents, index and glossary pages of a book.

What I know already	
What I want to know	
Where I will find this information	
What I have learned	
What I still need to know	

- Brainstorm what is already known about a topic. Research it further and note new information in an adjacent column on a page
- Write down instructions after reading an explanation.
- Note the parts of a text which have not been understood then decide how meaning may be sought.
- Have an unfamiliar word from a text on a piece of card. Children locate it within a text then try to decide upon its meaning by reading around it.
- Make a book of facts about a given subject.
- Use writing frames to represent ideas or an argument An example of this may be
  Before I began my reading I thought that...
  But when I read about it I found out that...
  I also learnt that...
  Further more I learnt that...
  Finally I learnt that...

FICTION

- Listen to stories told on a tape and follow a text.
- Tell stories onto a tape.
- Write an alternative ending.
- Make books.
- Dramatic readings of stories for the class or younger children.
- Write a story as a play then act it out for an audience.
- Re-present the story in a different form e.g. picture story or cartoon strip.
- Adverts in response to parts of a text e.g. 'Wanted' posters.
- A police and school report about a character.
- Character diaries.
- Retell a story from another characters point of view.
- Postcards from a character.
- Letters or messages to a character - with very young children a two way imaginary dialogue can be set up.
- Drama and role play to explore issues, re enact stories or change events.
- List all information given about the characters, setting and events.
- List likes and dislikes about a story.
- Book reviews.
- Re-organise a confused account of a story.
- Time line of events.
- Highlight high frequency words or punctuation within a text.

ART

- Imaginative paintings or drawings in response to specific descriptions or stories as a whole.
- Draw a map of the story plot events and places in order.
- Draw or paint a picture of a character.
- Paint adjectives.
- Paint verbs.
- Design book covers.
- Make clay models.

TECHNOLOGY

- Make puppets.
- Make models.
- Make sets for a play.
- Cookery e.g. porridge.

KEY OUTCOMES

Aims Project Focus	Teaching Outcomes	Learning Outcomes
Introduce the Literacy Lesson to improve: • The teaching of reading. • The range and organisation of resources for teaching reading. • Attitudes to reading and reading behaviour.	• Staff have become more structured when planning and delivering the Literacy Lesson. • Almost the whole school has decided to participate. • Planning has resulted in activities which are carefully matched to ability. • Praise is used more constructively for specific reading and learning behaviour. • Phonics planning is in place and resources collated. • Punctuation is taught in context.	• All children have a more enthusiastic approach to reading. • They experience constant success and are more eager to read. • They are choosing a wider range of genres. • Children are becoming more independent and responsible for their own learning. • Less able children read more willingly and use their knowledge about how texts work. • Pupils are developing their expression and intonation.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD year of LITERACY 1997-1998

This case study was edited by Bernard Campbell and is one of a series produced by the Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project.
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DEVELOPING STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING OF READING

CAROL SATTERTHWAITE, BYRON FIRST SCHOOL

AIM *To improve the whole school approach to teaching reading.*

Introduction

Byron is an inner city school with 326 pupils and an 80 place nursery. The majority of children are bilingual learners, who speak and write a range of languages: Punjabi, Bangla, Urdu and a small number who speak Pushto. The AIMS project has involved all members of staff: teachers, Section 11 (Talim) teachers, nursery nurses and non-teaching assistants. The AIMS coordinators and trainers have been the Deputy Headteacher and the Reading Recovery teacher.

The focus for our two years' work has been on reading and the teaching of reading strategies. It has, however, also been about the whole school developmental process and the subsequent phenomenal effects both on children's level of achievement and teaching methods. In creating this positive, empowering atmosphere for change and solid growth we have been able to 'weave' other exciting language projects into our work and have woven a coherent tapestry, which has had a powerful impact on children's language development.

Identifying Needs in Reading

Prior to 1993 a free reading system had operated. In 1993 the school adopted the Oxford Reading Tree scheme (ORT) and Reading Recovery started at Byron in 1994. Concerns about the low level of attainment in reading came from Reading Recovery observations and teachers' experience of children's performance.

Results from the Reading Recovery observation tests showed poor scores in:

- recognition of high frequency words;
- knowledge of book conventions;
- scores for integrated usage of reading strategies;
- ability to read texts other than Oxford Reading Tree books.

At staff meetings teachers identified concern about low levels of attainment and key questions about teaching children to read:

- What are the steps children go through on the route to making one to one correspondence between visual print and sounds?

- When should we stop children using their finger?
- How can we ensure children acquire high frequency words?
- Do Oxford Reading Tree books provide enough repetitive structure and high frequency words in the earlier stages?

Planning

Having identified the main areas of concern and secured AIMS funding, the Reading Recovery teacher and the Deputy Headteacher began to meet to discuss and prioritise whole school aims and objectives for Reading. We organised the content and schedule for staff training in reading and agreed to link the training to a process of observation of children's learning and teachers' teaching.

We found that being clear about learning objectives helped us to plan in steps and agree on targets. It also helped us to see where other projects could fit into the overall scheme. In retrospect, having this vision was one of the reasons of the success of the development work. We set objectives at three levels: pupils, teachers and the school:

PUPIL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Enrich pupils' reading diet
- Develop an integrated and independent usage of a range of strategies
- Extend pupils' knowledge of book conventions
- Extend pupils' recognition of high frequency words.

TEACHER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Increase staff expertise in the teaching of reading
- Learn how to maximise opportunities when listening to children read.

SCHOOL TARGETS

- Improve levels of achievement in reading
- Develop a reading system in the early years which would include high frequency words in text with a repetitive structure
- Develop reading guidelines.

Setting up an Early Reading System 1995-96

The Reading Recovery teacher and Deputy Headteacher bought early fiction books from the Sunshine and Literacy Links schemes which supplemented the Oxford Reading Tree scheme and graded them in broad bands according to Reading Recovery levels. Early Years and Key Stage 1 had a basket of books in the classroom which were colour coded to use alongside ORT texts. We had staff meetings to agree on organisation, usage and storage and decided that we would use the books to extend the reading diet of all children and also for those children who were 'stuck' at Stage 2 of the ORT scheme. We called these new books 'The Early Reading System'.

There were problems initially with the usage of these books, because people were not sure when and how to incorporate the books into the ORT scheme. We developed a new system for recording the books children had read and included these where the new books 'fitted in' to the ORT scheme. This seemed to make things much easier! There was also the problem of still not having enough books per class. We slowly began to address this by looking at funding. We bought some magnetic letters and boards to extend teaching strategies in high frequency word acquisition, rhyming, phonics and letter identification.

TRAINING

Training for all staff on teaching for reading strategies was provided by the Reading Recovery teacher. This was a whole day's training for each year group and included the use of praise, cue sources and developing independence in the reading process. Staff meetings provided extra training on the use of running records. We decided to complete a running record for each child once a term and at other times if required. Staff needed a lot of individual support at this time from the Reading Recovery teacher, but everyone was excited and stimulated by the new knowledge and enthusiastic to learn more about how children learn to read effectively. The nursery also had specific reading training and followed a process involving identification of issues, action planning and production of reading guidelines.

OBSERVATIONS AND FEEDBACK

As part of the learning process, after the training sessions, we carried out individual observations and feedback with other teachers. These worked really well. The staff got a lot from them and were interested in their own development and changes. The feedback was crucial; by building on the individual's strengths and praising these, constructive criticism was welcomed and accepted. Each member of staff, including nursery nurses, then observed the Reading Recovery teacher and further discussion was stimulated.

BETTER READING

We believe that the two years' focus on reading was crucial to our understanding of the reading process, but we also found that 'weaving' other reading projects in had a massive impact on both teaching and learning. The Better Reading Project trained non-teaching staff and volunteers who then listened to three children read three times a week for 15 minutes each session. Eight partners were trained in 1995-96 and three more in 1996-97. Eighty children were partnered (a fifth of our population!) and these children's reading ages improved. All partners are now highly skilled reading experts!

A Whole School Approach to Reading 1996-97

We used the same school developmental process we had used in the first year of the project. We asked staff what they thought they still needed to know. We (the Deputy Head and Reading Recovery teacher) again identified school development needs for reading, based on our assessment of staff needs and using children's assessment information from NFER tests and Running Records.

TRAINING

As a result of indentifying staff and pupils' needs in developing approaches to reading, we provided training for teachers on the following aspects of teaching reading:

- Use of magnetic letters/boards
- Teaching of high frequency words
- Higher order reading skills
- Planning for reading
- Assessment of reading
- Teaching for reading in group settings.

Training took the form of AIMS training days for each year group and staff meetings. All training and discussion was planned by the Deputy Head and Reading Recovery teacher

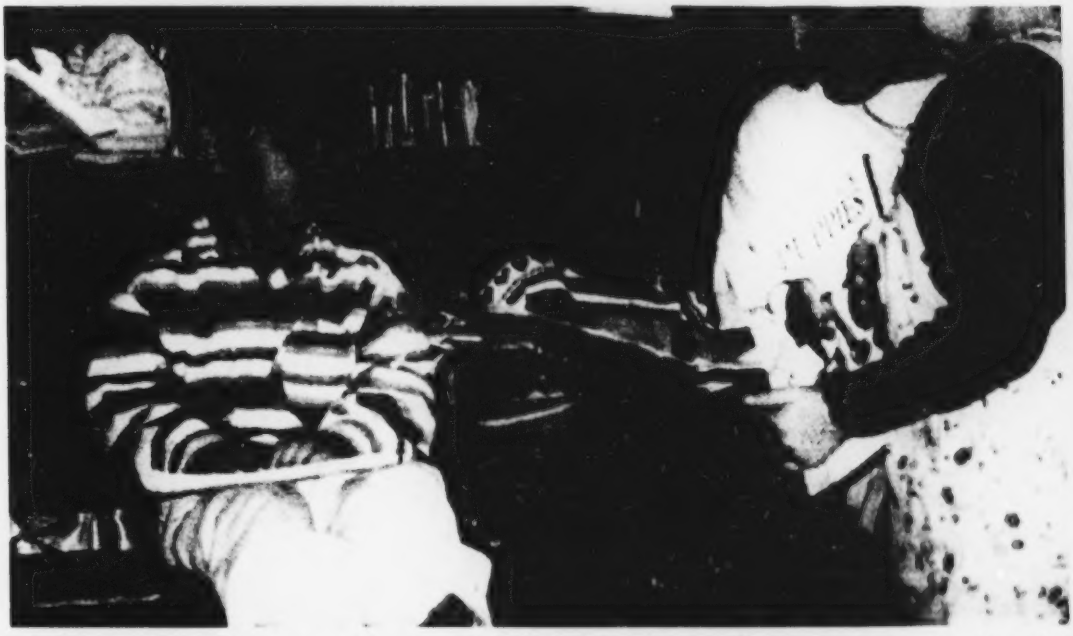
'Children are more confident, fluent and reading with expression. I am also more confident and have a much clearer understanding of the strategies used in reading'.

and delivered by the Reading Recovery team. Training was again followed by observation and feedback, this time focussing particularly on the use of magnetic letters.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Staff completed formal evaluation sheets about the training and observations and regular discussion took place about the successes we were achieving.

Pupil progress was assessed using NFER test results which showed that there had been a 100% increase in scores overall from 1995 to 1996! We also used teacher assessment of how children were performing in terms of use of reading strategies, confidence to approach new text, independence and attitude to reading. We also used Running Records to assess progress. Informal assessment of ORT levels children were reading at in year groups were compared to previous years. Comparing SATs results from 1996 to 1997 there has been an improvement of 24% in reading.

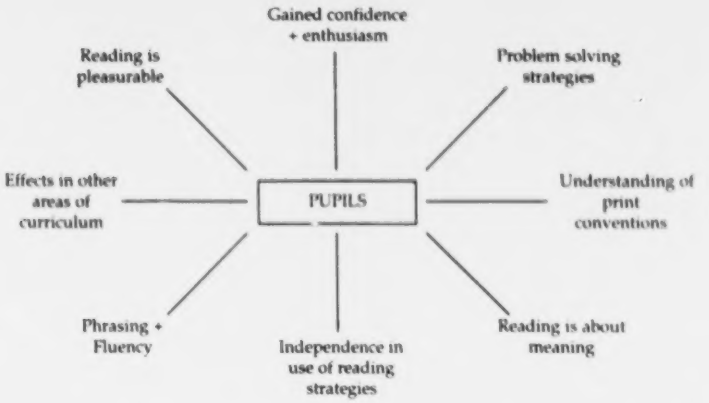


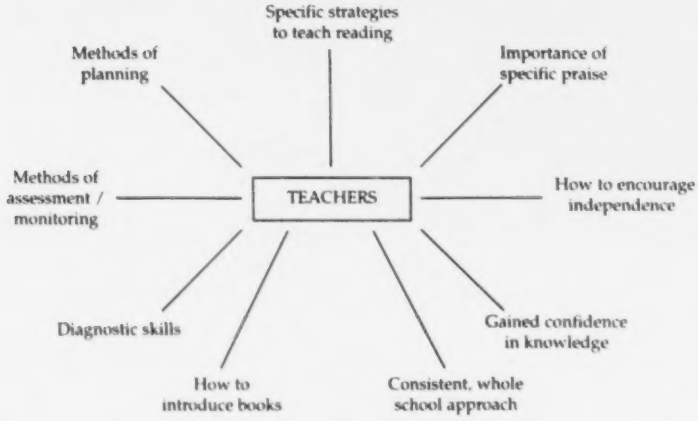
'I look at the pictures and sounds of the letters when I get stuck. If it doesn't make sense I go back and read it again.'

It's worked!

We have established a successful framework into which other projects, such as 'Family Literacy' and 'The Literacy Project' have been slotted and which have proved successful. We believe this has been because of our real understanding of the reading process and our desire to focus on this. Staff and children have been empowered and we intend to use the same developmental process in our next project.

'I can read better and the stories are not so boring. I can do my work better in the classroom.'





KEY OUTCOMES

Aims Project Focus	Teaching Outcomes	Learning Outcomes
• Improve the Teaching of Reading	Teachers: • Are better informed about reading • Have integrated new knowledge and skills into planning • Are implementing a real change in teaching focus and approach. • Have developed a consistent whole school policy and guidelines for the planning, teaching and assessment of reading, which has established a firm basis for all language development work.	Pupils: • Pupils have become more aware of their own processes of learning and have gained focus and confidence. • Reading abilities have improved as demonstrated in SATs results, NFER test results, and overall reading scheme levels.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD year of LITERACY 2007-2008

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DEVELOPING A SYSTEMATIC WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO TEACHING READING

CLAIRE HEAD FEVERSHAM FIRST SCHOOL

AIM *To raise achievement in reading.*

We began our project with the following questions.

- What does effective teaching of reading involve ?
- How can I improve my teaching in these areas? What are my next steps ?
- How can I be effective in helping to develop the practice of my colleagues ?

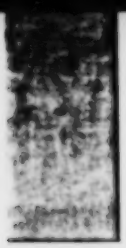
What does effective teaching of reading involve?

We addressed the first question by exploring the lessons that Reading Recovery has taught us about what makes a good reader and the strategies that have worked in Reading Recovery. After talking to our own Reading Recovery teacher about how we could bring Reading Recovery techniques into the everyday classroom we decided to concentrate on the effect that accurate individual assessment has on improving a child's reading skills.

We began by organising observation sessions for all teachers of the half hour daily Reading Recovery session in school. After they had observed, the reading recovery teacher provided a feedback session to explain some of the techniques and strategies she was using. This was followed up at a later date by the reading recovery teacher observing how teachers listened to and recorded individual pupil's reading.

Once everyone had become familiar with the approaches used in Reading Recovery we adapted the running record sheet to make it simpler to use in the classroom for ongoing assessment purposes. Based on the observation and feedback sessions, guidance was written to accompany the running record and it became a vital part of our reading policy. Staff now complete running records once per term with each child in their class. The Reading Recovery teacher and the English Coordinator monitor this and give feedback about the type of analysis and future action teachers were recording on the running record sheets. The information gained from this is used to inform teachers planning.

Once this system was established and working throughout school we realised we needed to develop our response to the specific evidence gathered about children's individual reading ability. This led us to consider the second question in our project plan:



How can I improve my teaching of reading? What are my next steps ?

We tackled this from three angles:

- What reading scheme books and teacher resources do we have and how are they stored ?
- What systems do we have in place to ensure continuity and standards of reading throughout school ?
- We consulted other schools, current literature, the LEA language team, attended relevant courses and asked our own staff !

During this period it did feel as though we were becoming buried under the deluge of information and ideas we were generating. We wanted to maintain everyone's enthusiasm and the momentum of the project but needed to impose some structure upon it to ensure we harnessed all our ideas and made them work for us in everyday life ! The pressures of time and teachers' and pupils' needs reminded us that we were seeking practical solutions to the daily challenge of teaching reading.

BOOK RESOURCES

We decided to go back to more fundamental and practical issues such as what sort of books we had and how they were stored and used. We had a variety of reading schemes throughout school which were colour coded according to our own system of progression within each National Curriculum level. We relied heavily on Sunshine Spirals and Literacy Links in Early Years and Key Stage 1, and Story Chest in Key Stage 2. As one of our school development aims was to improve the way our children responded to stories we felt we needed to provide a richer source of enjoyable reading material. We began by supplementing our current schemes with modern multicultural story-led schemes such as Oxford Reading Tree and Zoom. We added fiction and non-fiction books from our class libraries to the selection of school and home reading books. More recently we have bought a variety of big books with a small number of multiple copies for group reading. We intend to develop resources to support literacy time throughout school using these sets.

BOOK ORGANISATION

Throughout school we organised our reading books to ensure that the books that children chose were at a suitable level for their ability. We sorted out our non-scheme and scheme-reading books, colour coded them and neatly arranged them in clearly labelled boxes for children and teachers to use.

Books that children read to their teacher are now stored separately and chosen to match the child's' needs as outlined by their current running record. The progress each child makes through reading to the teacher is recorded in their reading record booklet which is stored with their current school reading book.

Children were provided with increased support and encouragement for reading at home. We improved the system for taking books home by providing them with a book bag, introducing an index card to record daily reading at home and by making sure that children had an opportunity to change their books every day as soon as they had finished a book.

We successfully trialled a Year 2 reading record book which encouraged parents to comment on their child's reading. The Year 2 teacher found it useful to write a positive comment approximately every two weeks to respond to parents and on occasion to model comments about children's reading. In nursery, parents are provided with an introductory booklet about 'How to help your child at home' and are encouraged to talk about stories with their children.

The English coordinator collected in manuals for reading schemes and the teaching of phonic and comprehension skills and stored them centrally. Photocopiable banks of material were put into files for each key stage to match certain schemes. Children and teachers were getting excited about getting their hands on our lovely resources and the possibilities for making more ! We knew now what reading materials we had and how they progressed through school. We were armed with our reading policy and running record guidelines but we still needed to bind this together in a common school system.

Creating a whole school approach to reading

A visit from an invited inspector at this time drew our attention to the fact that it appeared we had no uniform approach to teaching reading. We felt as a school that we had invested a lot of time in improving our reading and had tried to incorporate the Reading Recovery methods into everyday classroom life. We realised we must reflect this

knowledge in our whole school policy and organisation of reading.

There should be diversity in methods and approaches to teaching reading to reflect the differentiation between age groups. At the same time, the system through which this takes place should have a common thread throughout the school. We developed a Reading File as a documented system which would provide a structure to unify us and give us a starting point to help explain how we teach and monitor reading to others, such as support teachers, students and inspectors. The class teacher is the key person responsible for updating and maintaining this file, however it should be accessible as it is a valuable resource to all staff who listen to children reading in the classroom.

THE FEVERSHAM READING FILE

- *Weekly Class Reading Record*

Teachers initial a box opposite a child's name each time they hear the child read. Children can be grouped according to reading band. A weekly check is kept on how often individual children change their home reading book.

- *Reading Policy*

A copy of the policy and guidelines is kept in each file for reference.

- *Targeted Reading Group Sheet* ***(See Table 1)***

Based on evidence gained from running records and ongoing reading record book comments, children are placed in this grid and taught the specific reading skill in small groups. Individuals move from group to group at their own pace, not in the order the skills are written on the sheet.

- ***Reading Skills Check Lists and Support Material on Reading Behaviour*** ***(See Table 2 & 3)***

Two check lists were devised after research and discussion by a reading working party and provide a framework of knowledge and skills for teachers to refer to. Again, children are expected to progress through these skills according to their individual ability. We expect most children in each year group to achieve the level outlined for them by the end of each year.

There is also a sheet entitled 'Listening to Children Read'. This provides sample comments to help staff record useful comments outlining errors and ways forward. Everyone is aware that they need to give praise and positive verbal feedback to the child during and after a reading session. ***(See Table 4)***

- *Key Words*

Lists of common words are given for each year group which the children learn how to read and write independently through a variety of teaching strategies.

- *Running Records*

The last running record and the most recent one are kept in a named bag for each child. Running records are completed towards the end of each term and the comment and analysis sections are used to inform planning and group children for specific skill teaching. The termly records serve as a record of children's progress and highlight year group or class issues that we may need to focus on.

- *Evaluation*

The English coordinator evaluates and reviews the use of the files with year group teams on a termly basis.

Table 1 **Targeted Reading Groups**

Class: Date Begun:

Individual Letter Sounds	Closing Letter Sounds in Simple Words	Double Initial Consonant Blends	Vowel Digraphs	Consonant Digraphs	Final Consonant Blends	Word Endings
Develop Expression	1 to 1 Correspondence	Knowledge About Directionality	Punctuation ?!"'..	Encourage to Discuss Content of Story	Needs to Widen Breadth of Reading Material	Other

Working Together

Throughout the period of developing this system staff were given the opportunity to work in teams to make, trial and evaluate resources to support reading in their year group. This work took place over three half day sessions per team and began with teachers working in pairs to research one aspect of reading. The team then produced a report outlining their findings on particular reading skills, offering some practical ideas for teaching them. The following topics were explored:

- Reading for meaning.
- Extending reading through the use of CD Roms.
- Extending reading through the use of reference materials.
- Developing reading resources to support the Early Years.
- Group reading and recording methods.
- The relationship between reading and writing.
- Environmental print.

On the second half day session teachers were asked to work in pairs to make some resources to match the specific needs of one of their targeted reading groups. This session was followed by teachers trialling the resources with a small group, observing each other teaching and evaluating the effectiveness of the resources made. All teams completed an evaluation sheet which was used to feedback to the rest of the staff.

Assessing Our Project.

Throughout this project as goals have been set and achieved and targets redefined the following belief has endured :

> 'Reading is much more than the decoding of black marks upon a page, it is a quest for meaning and one which requires the teacher to be an active participant.'
> (English for Ages 5-16)

One of the best results from this project has been the way that teachers' levels of enthusiasm, knowledge, interest and expertise have been increased through the enjoyment of active participation in improving children's reading.

Several questionnaires completed by staff at significant stages in the project helped us to stay on course and whole staff feedback has been guided by the ideas and opinions expressed in these.

Teachers have appreciated the time set aside to make resources and evaluate them with colleagues. It seemed that once staff had been given this chance to talk and plan together, resource making gained pace and took on a life of its own !

Semi-structured evaluation interviews with teachers showed that the majority of staff felt that the AIMS Project work had had a significant impact in a number of areas:

TEACHERS

- Teachers' eyes were opened to a wider range of reading strategies
- Their confidence was boosted by participating in the project.

THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING

- The introduction of a common system and approach to reading had a big effect on school life and helped children to become more confident and independent in their reading and led to higher standards.

ASSESSMENT

- Running records and reading record booklets were effective and essential in planning the teaching of specific reading skills with individuals, groups and classes.

SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

- The AIMS Project gave staff a lot of practical help and had encouraged the whole school to work together. Partnership teaching and whole staff meetings provided a lot of mutual support. Trying out ideas in the classroom helped individuals move forward.

BILINGUAL CHILDREN

- The quality of teaching for bilingual children has improved because of the increased knowledge of a wider range of strategies and a stronger awareness of the need to draw upon the skills the child already has.

PARENTS

In a questionnaire about school, most parents indicated that they were very happy with the way reading is taught. In Year 2, the teacher who introduced the reading booklets for parents felt it opened up another channel of communication to parents and encouraged children and parents to share a book at home much more frequently. Several parents said they were pleased that they were able to write comments in their first language. We have now adopted these booklets throughout school.

PUPILS

Our National Curriculum Assessment results in 1997 for English were significantly better than the previous year's, improving from 47% to 60% level 2 and above. The 1997 Year 2 Primary Indicator Project results revealed that 92% of

Table 2 Reading Skills Checklist 1

	Concepts of Print Knowledge about text	Reading Strategy	Personal Response & Understanding	Reference Skills
Nursery	Enjoys choosing books to share with others. Hold book correct way up can identify pictures and writing. Turn pages correctly.	Begin to shadow teacher's reading, repeat from memory or join in with familiar stories.	Is able to select a book by themselves at story time. Shows through expression, gestures, talk, pictures their interest on a story.	Is able to point to favourite picture, picture of a girl boy, animal etc. on request.
Reception & Year 1	Know difference between letters & words. Can identify pictures/text. ' ' capital letters, author & title. Can hold book correct way & find beginning of a story. Begin to develop expression.	Children should be introduced to a range of strategies to decode new words in groups & as individuals eg. sounding out words picture clues, sight vocabulary, 'we know this word', contextual clues.	Children should be encouraged to talk about books to predict what will happen next & give their personal opinion. Be able to re-tell salient parts of a story.	Be able to find specific parts of a story by looking back through a book. Begin to recognise difference between fact & fiction books.
Year 2	Is able to discuss why he/she chose a book. Can identify title, author, illustrator. Can distinguish between fact & fiction books. Begin to recognise that some texts are set out in a certain way.	Is able to use knowledge of letter sounds, word families, sight vocabulary to read unfamiliar texts, is beginning to use a range of reading strategies include:ng contextual clues.	Answer comprehension tasks on books at appropriate level. Can express preferences for certain types of books, is able to express opinions voluntarily about books & can give examples from text.	Develop comprehension skills by referring back to texts for specific answers. Be able to locate factual books in class library using simple classification system. Be able to use contents pages.
Year 3	Be able to identify publisher Recognise that there is a wide range of literature e.g. poetry plays, fairy stories, myths, legends etc. & that these have different styles.	Is able to call upon a range of reading strategies and can re-read a passage to ensure meaning is not lost when 'guessing' unfamiliar words.	Be able to demonstrate through talking & writing that they are using evidence gathered when reading. Read a range of texts for enjoyment & express own views.	Be able to use databases to research information. Locate books in class library using simple classification system. Use contents & index pages effectively.
Year 4	Begin to appreciate writer's choice of language, style & presentation in accordance with the content. Relate texts to other books read or personal experiences.	Uses a range or reading strategies Be aware of book conventions, story structure, patterns of language, presentation, content & background of books.	Be able to refer to details in text to support comments about reading Recognise whether a text is fact, fiction, report, personal opinion genre. Write about preferences.	Be able to skim & scan reading material for specific points. Begin to understand how books are organised in public libraries. Use C.D. ROM & databases independently.

Table 3 Reading Skills Checklist 2 - Knowledge about Words

Nursery	Reception & Year 1		Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Key Words I am a me my Introduction to 'books' - book bags provided with booklet in encouraging parents to help at home Reading is Fun!	**Key Words** 18 key words (5 nouns) **Phonic Knowledge & word Families** Alphabet: Letter names and sound **Suggested order for Teaching groups of letters:** (sounds) 1/ s a t i p n 2/ ck e h r m d 3/ g o u l f b 4/ J q w x y z 5/ ai oa ie 6/ ee or ng 7/ ch sh th 8/ ou er ar	**Key Words** 20 key words (irregular) common 1 word per week re-visit learnt words regularly. **Phonic Knowledge & word Families** + development awareness of initial and closing sounds in simple words Sounds our simple words common to reading scheme e.g. c-a-t. Read these words, begin to identify sounds in words and remember these when writing words.	**Key Words** 30 frequently used words - 2 words per week, re-visited on a regular basis, began in first half term. **Phonic Knowledge & word Families** bl cl fl gl pl sl br cr dr fr gr pr tr sc sm sn sw tw st sp + double consonant blends; or (au aw al) oi (og) ou (ow) Vowel sounds/ word families ai (ae ay) oo (ue ew) ee (ea) ar ie (y igh) er (ir ur) oa (oe) (ow) ue (ew)	**Key Words** 40 frequently used words (mostly irregular) 3 words per week, spelling tests half termly on all half terms words. **Phonic Knowledge & word Families** Final consonant blends; th ld lf lk lm ln lp lt ct ft nt pt xt mp nd sk sp nk ed ly Word endings er e.g. - rubber ing e.g. run - running tch e.g. hatch silent 'e' words e.g. her ---e here hid ---e hide magic 'e' e.g. name	**Key Words** 100 frequently used words test. Spelling tests on topic word banks. Individual work on a range of adjectives to be used in creative work. **Phonic Knowledge & word Families** Triple consonant blends; str spl shr scr Harder word endings, e.g. -ous -ance -ence -able -our Be able to recognise nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions. Use a variety of dictionaries & thesaurus correctly & effectively.

Table 4 Listening to Children Read

Example Comments

Concepts of Print / Knowledge About Text

- Farah did not know where the title was but could recognise names and sounds in it when prompted.
- Narakat chose this book because he thought the cover looked funny.
- Wayne shadowed the teacher's voice as we read the book together first.
- Sobia read the title and was able to show me where the story began.
- Adnan could identify title and author, we talked about the illustrators job.
- Owen could discuss some of the other books he has read by this author.
- Sharon recognised that this was not a story about real Life.

Use of Reading Strategies

- Anaq was able to identify initial sounds in words but could not sound out the whoLe word.
- Samihah guessed lots of words by using the pictures e.g. mother, but could not point to specific words e.g. mother in the text, on other pages.
- Luke needs to build up sight vocabulary of common words, like, the, when which are difficult to guess or sound out.
- Rohit sometimes rereads the sentence to confirm meaning after he had sounded out an unfamiliar word.
- Naheem is using initial letters but not paying attention to the closing sounds of words, or letter strings in simple words.
- Sarita often substitutes words and this did not help her with the overall sense and meaning of a sentence.

Independence

- Anaq got stuck on several words on each page, although we had read the whole book through together first, therefore this text is a little too hard.
- Salma read 90% of text correctly and successfully used a variety of word attack skills when stuck on unfamiliar words.
- Sukdeep read independently with fluency and is beginning to pay more attention to expression.
- Although Salma used phonic skills successfully to decode lots of words she often lost the sense of meaning of the whole sentence and fluency was affected.
- Richard paused at full stops and could explain why he was doing this.
- Sarah put on a new voice when she realised someone was talking in this story.
- Today we talked about how to change the tone of our voice when we see a ? at the end of a sentence.

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children liked reading at school. Teachers felt that this reflected the positive attitude to reading throughout school. The Year 2 teachers are particularly pleased with the way children are now able to express opinions about books and refer back to the text confidently to answer level 2 and 3 comprehension questions.

Our involvement in the AIMS Project has helped us to target specific skills when teaching reading and this has helped to improve standards. This project has highlighted the expertise staff already have in specific areas of teaching reading and the importance of sharing this knowledge and experience. The enthusiasm and commitment which staff have maintained throughout the project has raised the profile of reading in the classroom. We have all become more aware of meeting children's specific needs and the range of reading strategies that can be used to help them on a daily basis. Now we have been through this experience together and taken the same steps forward we are ready to begin the journey again with the next challenge - developing writing and literacy time throughout school !

We have met the targets set last year and we have set new ones for next year. We have raised the number of children achieving level 2 and 3, however we still need to concentrate on those children achieving level 1. We aim to do this through focused teaching in literacy hour sessions, by targetting individual children through Better Reading Project and by providing Individual Education Plans designed to boost reading skills.

KEY OUTCOMES

Project Questions	Before	After
What does the effective teaching of reading involve?	Teachers were aware of but had not had an opportunity to investigate and use Reading Recovery techniques.	All teachers have learnt how to carry out accurate individual assessments of children's reading.
How adequate are the book resources we provided?	Reading was too dependent on a narrow range of reading schemes.	Reading schemes have been extended and enriched with a wider range of fiction and non-fiction.
How effective is our system of organising reading book resources?	Reading resources were dispersed around the school. Some were colour coded for level but not grouped to support different reading activities.	Home and school reading books are now organised to accurately match an individual's reading level and ensure greater continuity and progression.
How do we involve parents in supporting children's reading?	Children took books home to read.	A reading record which includes parent comments has increased the sharing of books at home.
What systems do we have in place to ensure a common approach to the teaching and assessment of reading?	Our approach to reading was not uniform through out the school and our policies and procedures were not sufficiently explicit or systematic.	We have successfully developed a detailed and well documented policy and system for assessing and teaching reading.
Can we raise standards of attainment in reading?	1996 English SATs L2+ 47%	• 1997 English SATs L2+ 60%, meeting the target we set. • 92% of KS1 children who took part in the Primary Indicator Project reading attitude test said that they enjoyed reading. • Year 2 children can express opinions and refer to text in response to level 2/3 comprehension questions.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD year of LITERACY 1997-1998

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LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

TRACY MCNALLY, GRANGE UPPER SCHOOL

AIM *To improve pupils' strategies for learning through coaching and assisting.*

Introduction

The 'Language for Learning' course was developed to address the difficulties encountered by pupils in their work with text across the curriculum. The project was developed over one term by six staff from the school working in close consultation with Bradford LEA Advisers, Kevan Collins and Siobhan Ramsey, from the Language Base at the T F Davies Professional Development Centre. The course does not simply aim to develop pupils' abilities as readers, but also involves the teaching of specific strategies to enable pupils to use text for learning.

The project also involves intensive INSET for mainstream classroom teachers in order that the pupils' use of the strategies is supported in all lessons. Teachers are also able to use the teaching techniques, which focus upon teacher delivery and intervention, to facilitate and enhance learning in each subject.

This project's main difference then, is that it does not focus upon the differentiation of the content. It is not concerned with making text more accessible by the production of simplified worksheets; instead it focuses very strongly upon the role of the teacher. It is the levels of interaction and points of intervention which support the learning. Pupils learn strategies which enable them to work up to the level of the text, rather than the text itself being modified.

THE PROJECT SCHOOL

The school is a 13 - 18+ upper school in Bradford. The community served by the school is mainly located within an inner city area with high levels of social disadvantage. Pupils' literacy levels on entry are well below the national average, with two thirds of the pupils entering the school with reading ages at least two years below average. The school has been proved to serve its pupils well, and has been identified as being in the top 20% of schools in the 'Value Added' tables. It was felt however that there could be an even more significant improvement, if pupils literacy and learning needs were specifically targeted as they entered the school, in order to give them a firmer basis upon which to build their knowledge and skills.

The pilot study

All of the pupils selected for the pilot study were operating at levels below average. There was still a range of ability within the group, which consisted of thirty Year 9 pupils. Their ability ranged from National Curriculum Levels 2 - 4, with the majority operating at around level 3 in both reading and writing.

The staff worked in pairs in the classroom, each pair working with ten pupils while the teaching techniques and learning strategies were being developed. This enabled the teachers to observe one another, as well as the pupils, and act as 'critical friends'. Review sessions were held on a weekly basis so that the techniques and strategies could be evaluated more effectively.

Pupils displayed clearly identifiable behaviours when using text in the classroom. The majority used decoding strategies when reading text but were not effectively using all the cue sources. This meant that there was a high dependence upon teacher input to promote understanding. When asked to read aloud pupils would:

- read word for word, paying little attention to phrasing, or
- read very quickly, disregarding punctuation
- substitute nonsense words
- omit or insert words
- skip whole lines of text
- ignore the organisation or layout of the text.

When questioned about text, pupils would often display very superficial levels of understanding, which suggested that pupils were not trying to make sense of what the were reading.

These observations of pupil behaviours were discussed with the pupils who had been selected for the pilot study. When asked about what they did if they were asked to read text which they did not understand, one pupil said:

'If I don't understand it, I ignore it or ask the teacher.'

This statement highlights the level of dependence on the teacher. All of the pupils in the pilot study seemed to feel that the teacher would provide the answers. They did not know how to make reading a more active process, and had not developed strategies which would enable them to access deeper levels of understanding for themselves. These pupils had learned how to cope, but would not do anything which involved them in taking a risk, because they did not want to fail by getting the wrong answer. These pupils find it safer to constantly feed off the teacher, and inevitably, because of syllabus demands and pressures, it is safer for the teacher to provide the answers so that the pupils have the right information. The problem is that the pupils will not internalise the information and they will not make it make sense for themselves, so they are unlikely to retain the knowledge that the teacher wants them to learn.

The language for learning course

The teacher's role is crucial, as the teacher is seeking to change pupils' learning behaviours. This is achieved by **coaching** or modelling the strategies which the pupils are learning to use. The teacher articulates thought processes as she reads the text, and shows the pupils what she is doing as she is trying to make sense of what she is reading. The teacher is actually coaching what normally takes place as 'in the head' activities, or learning behaviours, which cannot normally be seen. The teacher will show how she checks and self questions in order to make sense of the text.

When the course begins the teacher will only focus on a few of the strategies, in order to ensure that the pupils can clearly identify the strategies which they will then practise. As the course progresses over twelve weeks the teacher will introduce more of the strategies.

The first strategies to be introduced are:

- **scanning the whole text** to see how the information is organised
- **re-reading and reading** on to check for understanding
- **summarising** to internalise and make sense of what they have read
- **formulating simple questions** to check for understanding and make links across the text.

The teacher will then move on and begin to coach further strategies that the pupils will practise. These are:

- **re-reading and paraphrasing a set question** to understand the task
- **searching for the main points**

- **identifying the main points** by highlighting, underlining or making notes
- **formulating questions** for research purposes
- **synthesising information from several texts**.

As the pupils practise the strategies the teacher assists the pupils by questioning about the use of the strategies, or instructing them to use a particular strategy. For example, if a pupils says that they do not understand something in the text, the teacher could respond,

'What could you do to help you make it make sense?'

instead of explaining what the text is saying. If the pupil is still struggling the teacher could offer a strategy, and might say,

*'Try **re-reading** this paragraph,' or '**Summarise** what you think it's about. Does that make sense?'.*

The teacher then praises very specifically to further reinforce the use of appropriate strategies, and will say for example,

*'I liked the way you **read on** there to check your understanding'.*

When **assisting**, the teacher must be able to identify the need for intervention very clearly to enable the pupils to move on. The teacher does not answer questions about the content, as her role is to encourage the pupils to adopt the strategies as **independent** learning behaviours. The content of the text is not what is important at this stage; it is the strategies and behaviours that the teacher must constantly highlight. The teacher also encourages the pupils to talk about how they achieved understanding to ensure that the strategies are becoming internalised.

The twelve week course that the pupils follow is very carefully planned. Pupils have two lessons a week, and are assessed at the beginning and end of the course. Texts are selected from across the curriculum, and non-literary texts are used as these are the texts with which pupils have most difficulty. Narrative texts are easier to understand because pupils can get the sense of what is going on even if they do not understand large sections of the text.

Each lesson follows a very similar structure. Pupils are reminded of the strategies which they have already practised and the teacher then sets the objectives for that lesson so that the pupils know very clearly what they will be expected to achieve. The teacher will then introduce the topic and ask the pupils to brainstorm. This is very important as it helps pupils to focus upon what they may already know, which builds confidence, and it also enables the teacher to introduce some of the vocabulary and concepts that they may encounter during the lesson.

The lesson then proceeds with the teacher coaching a small part of the text and the pupils being asked to practise. The teacher will then **coach** more of the text and may introduce another strategy, or reinforce one which has already been introduced. The teacher and the pupils work very quickly, as part of the learning process involves encouraging the pupils to remain focused on the task and to work at pace, which enables them to learn more effectively.

At the end of each lesson the teacher will ask, 'What have we learned?' and will encourage the pupils to focus upon the strategies they have been using.

Language for Learning - History

Emigration - Lesson 1

Time	Content	Organisation	Resources
15 minutes	Reading		
5 minutes	Review previous learning	Whole group with teacher	
5 minutes	Set objectives ... summary putting information together writing a report	Teacher	
10 minutes	Look at OHP: What information is there? Read first two main paragraphs - focus on the title - emigration and question 'Why did people emigrate?	Teacher coach Teacher coach	OHP OHP
5 minutes	Issue photocopies Pupils read rest of main text paragraphs and highlight important information, writing down their questions as they go along	Pupils individual	Photocopies Sheet 1 Highlighter
10 minutes	Pupils complete Push/Pull chart	Pairs	
5 minutes	Write a summary of main points		
10 minutes	Pupils write a response following a dictated beginning. They do not have to write the full report at this point (see sheet for exemplar dictation)		
	Review		

Assessment

The pupils are assessed using a variety of methods. At the beginning of the course the pupils complete a questionnaire which asks them to think about their reading habits and their attitudes towards reading and text. These

questionnaires are discussed on an individual basis with the pupils and form a starting point for discussions with the teacher. The pupils also complete an inference test which helps the teacher to see whether the pupils are able to make sense of text independently. This test is also issued at the end of the course so that changes in pupils' levels of independent reading can be identified. This test is not a straightforward comprehension test as it requires the pupils to read beyond the surface features of the text and put information together in order to achieve understanding.

Throughout the course the pupils have a fifteen minute silent reading period at the beginning of each session. During this time the teacher will work with pupils individually, and will hear them read. The teacher takes a 'Running Record' which helps the teacher to identify the strategies and cue sources the pupils is using when reading. The teacher's responses are very important at this point as the teacher must praise appropriate behaviours and instruct the pupil to use further strategies to help them to make sense of what they are reading.

At the end of the course the pupils will complete the inference test again. They will also work independently upon a piece of text and be asked to respond to the text by demonstrating the use of the strategies they have learned. They are asked to:

- read the text and write down the questions they are asking as they read
- answer their questions
- summarise paragraphs and eventually the whole text
- search for information to help them to write their own continuation of the text.

[illegible] and evaluation

The project has been monitored and evaluated in a variety of ways, using both qualitative and quantitative measures. These have included:

- the evaluation of pupil assessments
- observations of pupils working with text, both in the project lessons and mainstream classrooms
- the evaluation of pupil questionnaires the analysis of SATs papers discussions with mainstream teachers
- the use of the MacMillan reading test to evaluate entry and exit points
- observation of the project lessons by inspectors, advisors and mainstream teachers.

The responses made by the pupils have been extremely encouraging. Many felt that the project lessons had been enjoyable, and pupils often made the comment that the lessons seemed to pass very quickly. They felt that they were 'busy' during the lessons and that they 'got more done' in these lessons. In discussions following the Key Stage 3 Tests, many pupils felt that the project lessons had helped them to know what to do when trying to understand the text and the questions. One girl said,

'I was really worried when I saw the passage about Antarctica, but then I remembered Language for Learning, so I re-read the passage and I was able to understand what it was on about.'

During the visits made to mainstream lessons, it was very evident that the use of the strategies for some of the pupils depended upon how much the teacher was reminding them of what to do. Where the teacher gave clear instructions to re-read, summarise, or search for information, the pupils responded very positively, and knew what was expected of them. For example, one boy said during a science lesson,

'If I hadn't done Language for Learning, I wouldn't have even tried to read this.'

Another girl talked of how she had had to present information to her class in her role as council representative, and said,

'I really panicked at first because I had to read all this information and then talk about it to the class. I tried to go through it using what we'd done in Language for Learning and then I could do it.'

In the questionnaires given to the pupils at the end of the course only two pupils, of the sample of fifty questionnaires analysed, felt that the course had been of no benefit, and most of the pupils were able to describe instances in mainstream lessons where they felt able to use the strategies.

The inference test data also gives positive indicators. Many pupils' scores had increased, and some, very significantly, had doubled their initial score. Although some pupils' scores had hardly changed, it also seemed significant that in one of the questions, where the pupils are asked to draw a plan of a road

junction where an accident has taken place, the visualisation of the road showed vast improvements, which would suggest that many of the pupils were more able to make sense of the information being presented.

Inevitably the responses to the assessments are also determined by pupils' writing skills, and so for some of the pupils this presented a problem, as they found it hard to express their ideas in a written form. However these pupils were observed to be more confident in trying to access the text during lessons, and were often able to present summaries and other responses to the text orally, again showing understanding of what they had read.

In-service training

Over the last two years, approximately two thirds of the staff of the school have participated in inservice training which has been specifically designed to help teachers to not only have a better understanding of reading and learning behaviours, but also to promote the use of the teaching techniques in the mainstream classroom. Pupils do need encouragement and support if they are to be able to use the strategies more independently, so it is vital that the techniques used in mainstream classrooms have coherence, and become part of each teacher's planning and delivery.

- The In-service programme itself involves:
- a half day course which focuses upon the theory and background to the project
- observation of project lessons in school
- a half day review and planning session.

The in-service training has been well received, mainly due to the fact that it focuses upon real needs and issues, and because the teaching techniques and learning strategies can be seen to be valid and reliable. Teachers have reported that they have noticed a difference when they have used the techniques themselves. One teacher reported;

'I can't do so many practical lessons now, so I have to use text more often now. The course certainly gave me more confidence in knowing how to tackle this.'

Developments

The project has now been trialled in two other upper schools and has been very well received. These schools are in the process of reviewing their Year 9 curriculum so that the project lessons can become an integral part of the curriculum, as has now happened at the project school. Other schools have expressed an interest, both from within Bradford and from other LEAs.

The pupils who took part in the initial pilot are now in Year 11 and are preparing to take their GCSES. Many still feel that the project had a major impact upon their learning, and their results will be closely analysed. One of these pupils said recently when asked if he still remembered the course;

'I really enjoyed it, it was good - it really helped me to learn.'

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KEY OUTCOMES

Aims Project Focus	Teaching Outcomes	Learning Outcomes
• To develop teaching and learning strategies that will improve pupils ability to use text for learning.	• Over two years two thirds of staff in school have been systematically trained in techniques to improve reading and learning behaviours. • This training has made a difference to teachers working in mainstream classrooms. • A Language for Learning Programme has been developed for students. • Teachers have learnt to coach and model target learning behaviour. • The success of this programme has led to its adoption by other schools.	• Responses by pupils are extremely encouraging. • Pupils have learnt skills of: scanning, re-reading, reading on, summarising, paraphrasing, questioning, identifying main points. • Pupils enjoy the Language for Learning programme. • Many pupils feel that the course had a major impact on their learning. • Pupils have learnt new skills through coaching.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO READING FOR INFORMATION

DORRIE BROWN AND GWYN TIMBERS, MANNINGHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

AIM *To develop a whole-school approach to improving pupils' understanding of information texts. Research, develop and disseminate strategies for tackling information texts..*

Rationale

Attainment in reading was well below the national average according to national curriculum levels and from reading tests. Neale reading-tests showed a wide disparity between scores for 'accuracy' (decoding text) and 'comprehension' (understanding what was read). Although teachers questioned the validity of these tests due to their cultural bias, there was a general consensus that something had to be done. Even the 'best' readers had great difficulty in subject-specific reading.

The OFSTED inspection in 1994 had identified reading as an area of concern and, before the AIMS project started, we had highlighted reading as a key area for development. In terms of a long term impact, we aware of the limitations of scattered pockets of good practice developed by individual teachers. To really develop the children's skills, a whole school approach was needed.

The AIMS Project helped us develop this more strategic approach. We have made consistent and lasting changes in the way we approach reading in subject teaching, and we have improved the range of methods children employ to understand texts.

Objectives

We had to 'think big' and have a long term vision of the improvements we wanted to make. At the same time we had to start with manageable tasks and a firm foundation. This was achieved by taking a narrow focus in the first year and building and extending the work in the second and subsequent years.

AIMS PROJECT - YEAR ONE

- Improve Reading Skills in Humanities in Year 5.

AIMS PROJECT - YEAR TWO

- Extend the teaching of reading strategies in Year 5 Humanities into Year 6 Humanities.
- In Year 5, increase opportunities and strategies to encourage types of talk which clarifies meaning
- Introduce the 'scaffolding' of extended written work, using Exeter University EXEL writing frames
- Develop the same strategies and skills in Year 5 Science.

The Process of Planning and Implementation

AIMS PROJECT – YEAR ONE

The whole Year 5 team, Section 11(TALIM) teachers, and the English Co-ordinator, spent one full day each term planning reading activities for Year 5 History and Geography. The English Co-ordinator was involved in order to ensure that the approaches to teaching reading would be developed as a whole school initiative and would subsequently be developed in other years and subject areas.

Mainstream and TALIM teachers taught in pairs in order to trial and review new strategies. Individual lessons were jointly planned and roles agreed. Each new strategy was reviewed by the two teachers using it. At regular Year 5 meetings in directed time, the whole team shared and evaluated new strategies they had tried. This team review was essential in order to raise individual teacher's level of commitment, ensure ownership and to develop the cohesion of the project.

The involvement and enthusiasm of the Headteacher and Deputy raised the status of the project, ensured that regular information and evaluation was provided for the whole staff and that reports on the project's progress were made to Governors. The TALIM team played a vital role in disseminating ideas across Year 5, and they introduced some of the ideas in Year 6, sowing the seeds of the second year of the project in advance.

AIMS PROJECT – YEAR TWO

By the time they entered Year 6, Year 5 children had developed many skills in tackling texts. It was vital to maintain and develop the children's skills and to induct Year 6 teachers into the new approaches. The new head of Year 6 had been a Year 5 teacher in the previous year and therefore was able to lead the development of the Year 6 project with confidence. Planning days were arranged and the systems of paired teaching and team review developed in Year 5 were carried out in Year 6.

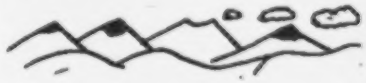
AIMS PROJECT – YEAR THREE

Next year, in the final year of this project, we will extend the approaches into Humanities in Years 7 and 8 and Science in Years 6, 7 & 8. This may sound over-optimistic, but some of the teachers who teach in year 7 and 8 also teach in the lower part of the school, and the ideas will not be new to them. By then, there will be a 'critical mass' of teachers committed to the project, which we hope will maintain its progress. There will also be a large number of children in school for whom this approach is normal working practice.

The Teaching and Learning Strategies We Introduced

BRAINSTORM AND QUESTIONS

Meaning needs to be contextualised and reading a text is easier if the reader has specific questions in mind. We began each History and Geography topic by brainstorming what pupils already knew. They then went on to form their own questions about what they wanted to find out.

We want to know...	*I know the answer to this*	*I have no idea about this*
		
1. Which country has the most mountains?		
2. Who built mountains?		
3. What does a mountain really look like?		
4. When were mountains made?		
5. When is a mountain called a mountain?		
6. Why do people want to climb mountains?		
7. Why are mountains so dangerous?		
8. Who was the first person to climb Everest?		
9. Where is the world's biggest mountain?		
10. How many mountains are there in the world?		
11. How big do mountains grow?		
12. Why do mountains grow?		
13. What is the world's smallest mountain?		
14. Do mountains make avalanches fall down?		
15. Are mountains spooky? What's on top?		
16. Do people live on mountains?		
17. Why do people live on mountains?		
18. Are all people scared of mountains?		
19. What sort of people want to know about them?		

Discussion then took place as to what was a sensible question and whether we could reasonably expect to be able to find the answer. These questions were displayed around the classroom for children to answer as and when the opportunity arose.

[redacted]

Children need to be taught how to use a text book. The use of big books is especially helpful here, or a class set where each child can have their own. In discussion the class answered the following:

- What is the title of the book? What does it tell us? What can we expect to find in this book? What does the cover tell us?
- Who wrote this book? What is that person called? Who drew the pictures?
- Where is the contents page? What does it tell us? Is there an index? What does that tell us? How is it different from the contents? Is there a glossary? What is a glossary?

The layout of a textbook needs re-inforcing at every opportunity.

We encourage the children to write their own definitions of the key words which describe the parts of an information book. For example the title is 'the name of a book', the author is 'the person who wrote the book' and the glossary is 'a small dictionary' and so on.

UNDERLINING

When children are presented with a dense text it is helpful if they can have a photocopy of the text so that they can underline words.

In one example (about Victorian street traders and entertainers), after reading and discussing the text together, the children were asked, in pairs, to:

- Find all the jobs people did and underline them in red.
- Find all the different foods that were sold and underline them in blue.

They could then make lists of the jobs and foods found in a Victorian street. The children were then asked to use their list to label a blank picture of the street traders, thus showing their understanding of the text.

LABELLING

Labelling is a good way of re-enforcing key words. One way we did this was to give the children overhead transparencies of mountains showing the key features we wanted the children to learn e.g. summit, glacier, peak, valley etc. The children were asked to use the transparency to make a line drawing and then label their drawing.

At a later date they were asked to use their labelled drawing to write a paragraph which described the transparency.

[redacted]

A strategy for helping children read the text carefully and ignore irrelevant information, is to present the children with a text which has been specially prepared with several nonsense sentences inserted. The children have to cross out anything that they think should not be there. Whilst the insertions in the example seem glaringly obvious, many of the more able readers had difficulty in deciding what to delete. The habit of unquestionably accepting printed text is hard to change.

CHANGE THE FORM

Any activity which requires the child to take a piece of information, and present it in a different format will test the child's understanding of what he has read. One way of doing this is to take a text and ask the children to transfer the information into pictures. The child can only draw what he understands and cannot skim over what he does not understand. The quality of drawing is not important, as it needs only to be understood by the child.

A week later the child is asked to write an account based on these pictorial notes. This activity provides a child with a good combination of support and challenge to report on their understanding of the original text in their own words.

TABULATION

Another way of tackling a difficult piece of information and putting it into different format is to make a table. This type of task requires the pupil to re-read the text many times in order to clarify meaning and order their own understanding. Having to read for a specific purpose helps the child develop their comprehension skills and their ability to use written information.

At a later date the child can write a paragraph using their table to extract the key points and present it in their own words.

NOTE-TAKING

Children find it hard to take notes when all the information being presented is new. How are they to decide which bits are important and which are not?

A way to help them take notes, whilst watching a video, is to give children key words to focus on. For example whilst watching a video on the Alps we gave the children each a key word to focus on such as 'glacier', 'avalanche', 'tourist'. The children had to make notes only on their word and several children had the same word. They kept their notes and at a later date got together with others who had the same word. Between them they wrote up their information to present to the rest of the class.

USING TECHNICAL LANGUAGE IN A CREATIVE CONTEXT

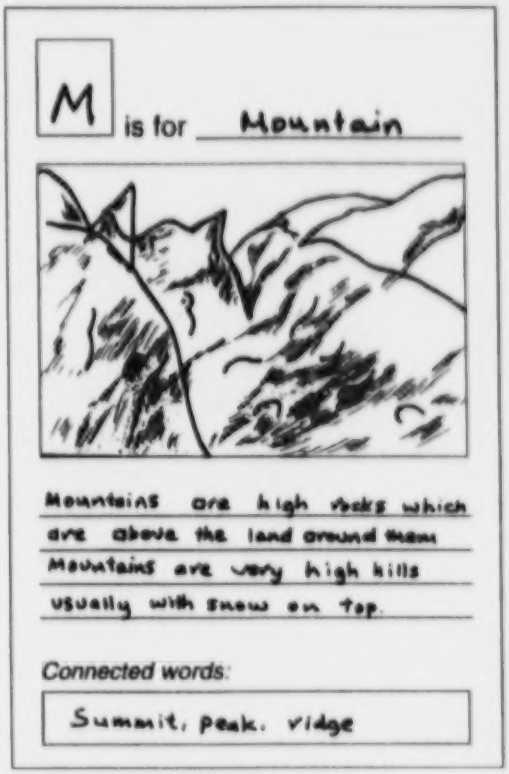
We used creative writing in order to consolidate and extend pupils' grasp of technical language. We linked the humanities work on rivers and mountains with an English poetry writing task and encouraged the pupils to use the technical terms they had learnt in their poetry. The children wrote poems during the 'river topic' describing the journey of a river. This was very successful and showed that children have really understood and internalised the meaning of some very technical words and were able to use them independently in a new context.

Another strategy we used, towards the end of the 'mountain topic', was a pairs exercise in which pupils were asked to use the appropriate technical language to describe a mountain landscape whilst the other child drew it. Pupils were able to use the technical language they had learnt in this different context, showing that they had developed their knowledge and understanding of specific concepts and terminology to do with mountains.

THE LEXICON

The idea of the lexicon was to raise the profile of specialist vocabulary and to make sure the children really understood the key words.

Each child would made their own lexicon on a specially designed format. They all started with the same key words and then added to their own lexicon as they came across new words. They used dictionaries and text books to define the meaning of the words.


M is for Mountain
Mountains are high rocks which are above the land around them
Mountains are very high hills usually with snow on top.
Connected words:
Summit, peak, ridge

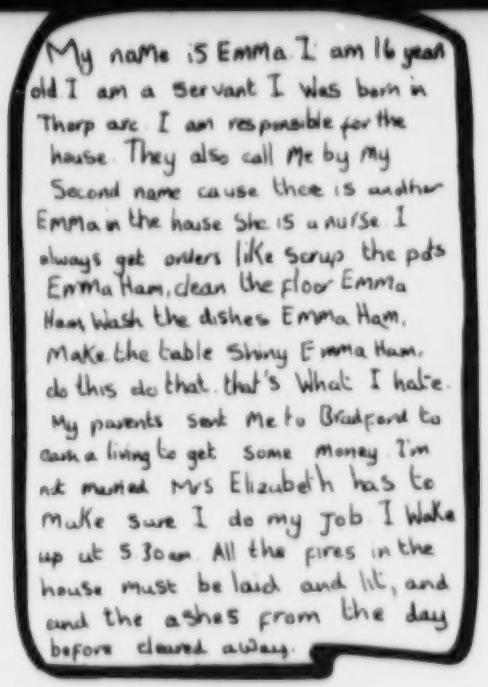
READING FOR A HISTORY

Whilst teaching a history topic on the Victorians we thought it would be helpful for the children if they could empathise with someone who lived in Victorian Times.

To do this we used our local, Victorian-built environment. We obtained the census material from 1869 and focused on Apsley Crescent, a street in which some of our children live. Each child was assigned a house, we visited the street and each child drew 'their' house. Back in the classroom they used the census material to find out who lived in 'their' house and answered questions about it.

They then chose one of the people who lived in the house and using text books tried to find out what life might have been like for that person.

They used the text books to help them draw the person and used a speech bubble to tell us about their life


My name is Emma I am 16 year old I am a Servant I was born in Thorp arc I am responsible for the house They also call Me by my Second name cause thee is another Emma in the house She is a nurse I always get orders like Scrup the pots Emma Ham, clean the floor Emma Ham Wash the dishes Emma Ham, Make the table Shiny Emma Ham, do this do that that's What I hate. My parents sent Me to Bradford to earn a living to get some money I'm nt married Mrs Elizabeth has to make sure I do my Job I Wake up at 5.30 am All the fires in the house must be laid and lit, and and the ashes from the day before cleared away.

Managing Change Successfully

- We had an ambitious long-term, whole school strategy for developing reading-skills and at the same time kept the initial focus very specific.
- The AIMS project coincided with the introduction of National Curriculum topics in History and Geography which meant that all teachers needed to develop materials and strategies, even those less enthusiasm for change.
- One person had an 'overview' of project to coordinate its progress through school.
- Year Heads led team development well, by valuing each individual's strengths and inviting their contribution.
- The Head and Deputy were enthusiastic and keen to be kept informed. They encouraged us and facilitated attendance at meetings and training events.
- We have a strong TALIM team with good partnerships between themselves and class teachers. Often this gave confidence in trying new strategies, and many thinking and talking processes could be modelled by the two teachers
- Change can be organic and unpredictable. The informal contacts between teachers from different year groups disseminated some of the practice, as did partnerships between TALIM teachers and teachers not yet involved in the project.

Summary

The most important aspect of the AIMS project has been the time it has given the teachers to work together to:

- **re-examine how children learn,**
- **share and develop strategies and resources.**

As the team culture developed around the task we had set ourselves, we found we were all enjoying the learning, both teachers and children. Enthusiastic teachers transferred their energy and optimism to the children. Partnership teaching with TALIM meant that new ideas could be tried out with confidence and we had more scope to model the techniques we wanted the children to use.

We learnt that by concentrating on the development of skills, children were learning to access information from a variety of sources, not just books, but other media such as videos, transparencies and photographs. Rather than telling and explaining the subject content we were providing the means for pupils to develop their own understanding of the content. As the children's skills have developed they have become far more independent as learners and this has increased their confidence and self-esteem.

Although our initial intention was to improve their reading skills, we also discovered we were significantly improving their speaking and listening skills, as a lot of the activities involved group work and reporting back to the whole class. We realised how very important discussing ideas and explaining to each other,

helps children to understand what they read. The children have begun to develop a greatly increased array of skills and these will be reinforced and developed as the AIMS project moves through the school.

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KEY OUTCOMES

Project Concerns	Pre Project	Post- Project
Can standards of pupils reading be raised?	Reading Tests showed a wide disparity between scores for accuracy and comprehension	School KS2 Y6 Standard Test results showed significant improvement: 96 L4+ EN 21% SC 30% 97 L4+ EN 38% SC 44%
Can we increase pupils understanding of subject specific information texts?	• Pupils can decode but frequently do not understand. • Pupils do not fully understand or use the layout of history and geography texts to access meaning. • Pupils lack skill in identifying main points. • Pupils lack understanding of subject specific vocabulary. • Pupils are often defeated by a dense text. • Pupils find it difficult to take notes.	• Pupils have a wider range of strategies for decoding classroom text eg underlining. • Pupils have a better understanding of how history and geography texts are organised and can explain how they use texts to select information. • Pupils are more able to identify main points in texts when provided with specific strategies. • Pupils understanding of specific terminology has been extended and consolidated. Pupils can use terms learnt in the history lesson in an oral and creative writing context. • Pupils confidence in reading has improved. They have succeeded in reading difficult texts with the help of strategies for breaking up difficult text. They have experienced success in reading texts from a a wider range of information sources. • Pupils can take notes when given a simple focus and can use their notes to summarise key points.
How can we extend the range of teacher strategies for teaching Reading Skills in Humanities in Year 5.	At present the range of teaching strategies is often limited to comprehension questions.	• The range of teaching strategies has been systematically extended throughout Year 5. • All teachers now use the following methods: underlining, dictagloss, labelling, information transfer using tables, teacher and pupil glossaries. These methods are written into the Year 5 Humanities scheme of work.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD YEAR OF LITERACY 2007-2008

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DEVELOPING A SPELLING POLICY

SCHOOL DAYS AT NEWBY FIRST SCHOOL

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

AIM *To raise pupil achievement through the provision of a structured approach to the teaching of spelling.*

Newby First School joined the AIMS project in 1995. Our project set out to research and produce a whole school policy and scheme of work for the teaching of spelling, which would meet the needs of all pupils in our school. Newby is situated in an inner city area of Bradford. Approximately 80% of the children are learning English as an additional language. For the majority of pupils, school is the only place where they see English being written. We felt very strongly that teaching needed to be specific and planned for, rather than incidental.

BACKGROUND

Spelling was chosen as a focus because it was an area of English that had not previously been developed at a whole school level. It was already on the School Development Plan for 1995-6. Teachers throughout school had recognised the need for a specific and consistent method for the teaching of spelling; this was also evident from the Key Stage 1 SATs results. Staff were already teaching spelling, using a variety of approaches and teaching methods. However, there was agreement that a policy which set out what to teach, how to teach it, and in which year groups, was needed, in order to provide the continuity and progression necessary to raise standards of attainment.

THE ACTION PLAN

The action plan fell into four main stages: gathering information about spelling from a variety of sources; drawing up a policy and scheme of work; disseminating and implementing the policy throughout school; evaluating the success of the policy. Two members of staff were initially involved in researching and writing the policy; the AIMS supply money was used for this purpose.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were to raise pupil achievement through the provision of a structured approach to the teaching of spelling. We wanted teachers and support staff to understand the theory behind how children learn to spell, and to have a clear framework for teaching. At a whole school level, we aimed to put in place a policy supported by a scheme of work, resources and teaching materials that would be of long term benefit to the school.

We recognised that children who struggle to spell, or who do not feel in control of their spelling, are held back in their overall development as writers. A confident speller would be more likely to be able to produce fluent writing. This in turn would provide access to greater achievement across all areas of the curriculum. We were also aware of the high premium attached to good spelling in society at large including by employers, politicians and educational bodies such as OFSTED.

RESEARCH

In order to ensure that our policy was well researched and based on good practice, we planned to visit other schools, within or outside Bradford LEA, to observe their practice, and to look at policies and resources. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate those schools which already had a whole school approach to spelling in place.

We looked for research into how bilingual children learn to spell. We read everything we could about spelling development: books, articles, and teaching manuals; and although this gave us a theoretical background on which to base our project, we found nothing about the specific needs of children learning English as an additional language.

To draw upon the knowledge of other staff in school, we carried out short interviews. Prior to the interviews, staff were given a prompt sheet of the areas we wanted to cover in discussion. The questions sought to clarify what spelling teaching was already happening in each class or year group; how and when it was carried out; what theoretical knowledge or opinions staff held about spelling development or the teaching of spelling, and from what sort of spelling policy they would like to work.

The final part of the information gathering process was to collect data about the current spelling ability of children in school. We drew up a 20 word spelling test covering irregular high frequency words, initial and final consonant blends, common letter strings, polysyllabic words, and compound words. We tested a mixed ability sample of children from each class.

The results demonstrated that many children in Reception enter school with little or no letter knowledge; some children were not yet distinguishing between letters, numbers and pictures. Moving up through the school, there was a gradual progression of skills, with some identifiable specific strengths and weaknesses. We referred to this information later in the project when we drew up the scheme of work.

SPELLING THEORY

We found a great deal of commonality in the theories of spelling we read. This is a brief summary of the main points.

- "bright" children, including those who are good readers, can have difficulty in spelling.
- too much focus on "correctness" is bad for spelling; children are easily demoralised.
- children learn to spell by inventing spellings; this requires a synthesis of old and new knowledge.
- spelling is a developmental process with an acknowledged progression. Gentry (1987) suggested the following developmental stages:
  - pre-communicative
  - semi phonetic
  - phonetic
  - transitional
  - correct/mature
- purposeful writing is a key to learning to spell.

Good spellers have been shown to demonstrate several features. They

- know the variety of sound symbol relationships
- know the probability of letter sequences
- know the likely position of letters in a word
- can break a word into its parts and know how to write the parts down (e.g. common endings such as "ing")
- try alternative spellings of a word in order to see which "looks right"
- think in meaning-groups, e.g. compound words (playtime, playground), roots of words (play, play + ed = played), prefixes (unhappy) and suffixes (friendly).
- have the ability to develop and use mnemonics or memory aids.

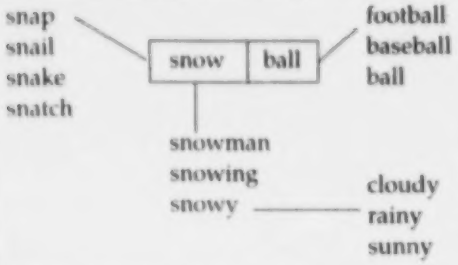
SPELLING POLICY

Because we were unable to find any specific research or theories into the needs of bilingual children learning to spell, we had to make the assumption that what is good practice for monolingual children would also hold true for bilingual children. In particular, we felt that by making spelling teaching more explicit, greater success would be likely for bilingual

children than had been the case through a more cross-curricular, less structured approach.

Word Web

Begin with a compound word, and make lists of associated words, e.g.



In writing our policy we aimed to equip teachers with as much useful background knowledge and theory as possible. The policy folder, therefore, includes sections on a history of English spelling, spelling theory, how to analyse children's work, features of spelling development, ideas for reluctant or "safe spellers", ideas for stimulating interest in words, mnemonics, special needs, and guidance for parents.

The policy was presented at a staff meeting, and then further INSET time was spent by all the staff on making and organising the resources necessary to implement the policy. It has now been in place for a year, and is being used throughout the school.

CONTENT OF SCHEME

Children are introduced to new spelling concepts in a structured way that ensures progression from year to year. Key concepts are revisited and developed in each year group. Teaching generally takes place in whole class or smaller groups. Follow up work then reinforces the main input of the week.

A word family approach is used, with children being involved in identifying patterns and generating lists of words. Resources to support teaching include games, worksheets and class activities. The correct terms are taught for vowel, syllable, consonant and so on; this allows children and teachers to discuss specific aspects of spelling.

Summary of Content of Spelling Scheme of Work

Year R	Letters of the alphabet
Year R+1	Two and three letter words
Year 1	Sh, ch, th Vowels and y Initial Consonant Blends - 2 letter Syllables Plurals
Year 2	Stem and 'ed ' and 'ing' endings oo ou Contractions Silent E ee ea Initial Consonant Blends - 2 and 3 letter ow oa oe ew Contractions oy oi
Year 3	Double consonants ou ow Syllables ai ay Initial Consonant Blends - 2 and 3 letter ea Plurals oo ew ue Compound Words
Year 4	Silent Letters er ir ur ure Homophones Vowels with R au aw or oor oa ore Prefixes ie y uy igh Root Words Suffixes

SUPPORTING CHILDREN DURING WRITTEN TASKS

There is a fine balance between two important skills in spelling - being confident and resourceful in inventing spellings, and being concerned about correct spelling. Too much invention does not necessarily lead to conventional spelling, and too much concern for "correctness" can inhibit the child from ever trying to write a new word. Our approach, therefore, includes the use of a word card for five new high frequency words, provision of word banks for topic vocabulary, encouragement of independent spelling for all other words, and developing the use of dictionaries.

The word card is used throughout school as a means of teaching correct spelling of high frequency words. New words are taken from

the school's list of Key Words and replace learnt words which are rubbed off the card.

Word Card

Sonia Ali	
girl	3/2/96
and	5/2/96
is	2/2/96
am	7/2/96
boy	8/2/96

Children are encouraged to proof-read their work to check that these five words have been spelt correctly. Learning the words on the card is promoted by copying them, either in large chunks, or, ideally, as a whole word, rather than letter by letter. Each new word added to the card is dated so that staff can monitor the child's rate of learning.

Children are encouraged to spell independently, drawing upon existing knowledge. Many useful strategies can be taught to children to develop their ability to generate spellings for themselves, such as :

- can you think of a word that sounds the same ?
- do you know any other similar words ?
- clap syllables of multisyllabic words
- stretch the word out; child has to say the word sl-ow-ly in order to hear all the parts of it.
- what other words do you know that might be linked in meaning, e.g. happy/unhappy?

"Look Cover Write Check" is a useful process which children are taught to use in order to learn words which they may have misspelt in their writing. A maximum number of two or three words is chosen; these are words which are likely to have the most 'pay off' for children in the future if committed to memory. A multi-sensory approach to "Look Cover Write Check" is also useful for many children, where saying the names of the letters out loud while writing the word large on a whiteboard, or tracing in sand and so on can help to firmly establish a visual, physical and auditory image of the word.

The objective of the project was to put into practice a whole school spelling policy, and through this to develop staff understanding of the spelling process and to raise pupil achievement. The implementation of the policy throughout school has been monitored at the planning stage at Unit and class level.

To assess levels of achievement in English, we have compared the end of Key Stage 1 SATs results from the year prior to the implementation of the spelling scheme with this year's results. In 1995 57% of children achieved Level 2 or above; in 1997, this figure had increased to 81%. Although it is not

Spelling Test Results

Total number of words correct (out of 20)
Average for each year group.

	1995	1997
R	0.125	4
Year 1	2	11½
Year 2	8	15
Year 3	13	16½
Year 4	15	17

Average number of correct letters (out of 88) by the 2 children from the lowest ability groups in each year group.

	1995	1997
R	0	0
Year 1	1	44
Year 2	14	655
Year 3	52	74
Year 4	70	78

48

possible to isolate the specific effect of the spelling policy in this, it has almost certainly contributed to the raising of standards.

A repeat of the spelling test that we originally carried out also showed a marked improvement in achievement, both in terms of the total numbers of correct words, and in how many letters towards each word children attempted successfully. All children, from Year 1 onwards, were able to make credible phonetic attempts at every word. Even the lowest ability children in each year group got very close to correct spellings of most words in the test. This has clearly demonstrated the success of the scheme.

The policy has also been evaluated by asking staff for feedback. All staff said that they felt clear about what they were teaching in spelling, and could access the resources easily. There were several suggestions made about how the word card could be improved; these will be considered in the next year. Overall, there was agreement that children are now much more aware of spelling patterns and word families and have learnt to use a range of different strategies for spelling words independently. Because children are able to write with greater fluency, they are producing more, and better quality work. In turn, teachers are now able to focus on the learning objectives of each task, rather than being asked for spellings. This is also contributing to an improvement in standards of achievement.

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KEY OUTCOMES

Project Concerns	Before	Now
We felt strongly that teaching of spelling needed to be specific and planned for.	Teachers used a variety of approaches and methods and recognised the need for a methodical and consistent approach.	Teachers feel clear about what they are teaching in spelling and have good access to appropriate resources.
We did not feel that our knowledge about teaching spelling was sufficient.	We felt unclear and inadequately informed about approaches to spelling with bilingual pupils.	School policy is based on a clear understanding of spelling. We are confident about using a wide range of methods for teaching spelling with all pupils.
School policy and guidance on spelling was underdeveloped.	We had an incidental and less structured approach to spelling.	We are having greater success by making the teaching of spelling more explicit.
Standards of achievement were too low.	In 1995 KS1 SAT results in English were well below the national average, 57% level 2+.	There has been a marked improvement in spelling demonstrated by tests in all year groups. In 1997 KS1 SAT results in English were in line with national averages, 81% level 2+.

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BILINGUAL POETRY PROJECT

ALEX HILLOWES, SCOTCHMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

AIM *To inspire high quality creative writing through the use of both Urdu and English poetry.*

A key strand to the school's approach to improving standards of literacy is the development of specific strategies for using pupils' first language in learning. The vast majority of pupils have Urdu as the language of literacy. Urdu, uniquely for Middle schools in Bradford, is taught as part of the school curriculum. Urdu and spoken Punjabi are treated as a high status languages and are regularly used in dramatic productions of Shakespeare and other class, year and whole school events. Productions of Winters' Tale, Tempest, Romeo and Juliet and Julius Caesar have played to receptive audiences of Asian parents, local First Schools and other schools in Bradford. Representatives from the Royal Shakespeare Company have witnessed these performances which have been written up in a journal article*. This is an extract from the AIMS Project work at Scotchman Middle School demonstrating an innovative approach to teaching poetry. The purpose of the AIMS Project at Scotchman Middle is

- to extend the range of teaching strategies which enable pupils to improve their learning and to use and understand specialist subject language.

In the first year of the AIMS project, year groups focused on technical language in Maths, Science and Technology. For example, a module of work in Science was developed using a bilingual glossary. This was used as the focus of a well attended parents workshop run in the Science laboratory by bilingual Science and Language Support teachers. Pupils and parents were encouraged to discuss and carry out activities at home. The quality of pupils' work and attainment in this module was particularly good. In the second year of the project, the aim is to develop modules of teaching and learning that challenge pupils to read, talk about and write texts that are beyond their immediate experience or initial competence.

In this example from the English curriculum, pre-twentieth century Urdu and English texts are linked, providing a challenging and stimulating module on reading and writing poetry for Year 8 pupils. This use of the combined Moghal and English literary and linguistic heritage of pupils' created new opportunities for exploring poetry and promoting pupil responses.

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Bilingual Poetry Project

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- inspire high quality creative writing in poetry
- use both Urdu and English spoken and written forms
- work within a specific poetic form
- build links between Urdu and English classical texts
- give pupils' access to challenging classical texts in both Urdu and English.

The effectiveness of this module depended on teaching which involved:

- detailed planning of individual lessons,
- a careful and developmental sequence of learning,
- a structured approach to the role of the pupils' first language
- the teacher's knowledge of and confidence with the poems
- high expectations of the pupils
- pace in delivery.

The module was developed and delivered through a teaching partnership between a monolingual English speaking teacher and a bilingual teacher. Both staff had developmental objectives: Alex wanted to observe the skills of a teacher of a modern foreign language in an English lesson context and to learn about how Urdu could be used and valued. Abdul wanted to develop his skills in using structures and deadlines in his English teaching. The group we chose to work with was a Year 8 class with a very wide ability range. Half a dozen were fluent in Urdu script and almost the whole class understood spoken Urdu and could access the Urdu when written phonetically in English script.

Our underlying research objective was to ascertain whether, by encouraging bilingual pupils to work in their first language, the quality of their creative writing in English could be improved. As a secondary objective, we were also wanted to learn about the quality of their writing in Urdu.

STIMULUS

- 'Ghazals' are a very traditional and popular poetic form in Asian literary culture, like 'Haikus" in Japan and 'Sonnets' in England. We chose a 'ghazal' by Ghalib Mirza who was a famous Moghal poet writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
- As an extension to this work, we used one of Ghalib Mirza's ghazals in combination with a well known Elizabethan sonnet, Sir Walter Raleigh's, 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage ' which had a very similar theme.

The texts were very challenging in both languages. We felt it was essential to have the highest expectations. We decided to use two periods to accomplish this project so 'pace' in the lesson was crucial!

A WISH TAKES A LIFETIME - *A ghazal by Ghalib Mirza, in English and Urdu*

A wish takes a lifetime to make its own impact
Who lives that long for your love to become a fact!

Every wave has hundreds of dangers within it.
How long does it take someone to find the perfection of a pearl?

Love demands patience, but ambition is hot and rash.
How to reconcile the two, each so impetuous and suspect?

Won't you listen to the urgent call of life?
For you may be turned to ashes before you react.

The sun's message to dew is to vaporise and vanish.
Is that all that we feel will come to?

My beloved's single glance is worth more than a Life's ransom.
But life is just a flicker; you cannot addd to it or subtract.

What except Death can cure Love's sickness?
A candle keeps burning till dawn, but for no longer.

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Lesson 1

1. Give a glossary of difficult words in both English and Urdu for Ghalib's ghazal 'A wish takes a lifetime...'
2. Read out the 'Ghazal' in both Urdu and English.
3. In pairs, pupils 'find out' how the ghazal is structured. Can they find a pattern?
4. Explain what a ghazal is, using pupils' responses.

   A ghazal is a poem that deals with particular themes: love , both human and divine, life, death and immortality. It has a particular form: it is divided into any number of couplets and each couplet has a meaning of its own, but all the couplets are united by the same idea.

5. In pairs, the pupils take one verse each. The task is to select words and images, in both Urdu and English, that mean something to them and made an impact on them
6. Each pair read out their choices.
7. Class brainstorm about this activity:
   Do the words and images selected help us to understand the meaning of the poem?
   What is the unifying idea of the ghazal?
   Can you quote from the poem to back up your idea?
8. In pairs, write a two-line verse of your own using the words you have chosen from your selected couplet. Use either Urdu or English. If you understand the Urdu wo , but cannot write Urdu script use Eng ish letters to write the word phonetically.
9. Pupils use their own and other pupils' couplets to cut and paste a selection of verses to make a ghazal on a common theme.

Examples of Pupils' Work

WISHFUL THINKING

Love is hard and I can't let go.
It makes demands to stay forever.

A wish takes a lifetime. Just wish anything
Of one who would live so long for you.

Someone wishes for love and joy
Like for a precious pearl in the sea.

I risk my life for a perfect white pearl
But I would do that for you.

Wishful Thinking

یہ مشکل ہے مگر جانے نہیں دیتا ۔
یہ ہمیشہ رہنے کے لیے کہتا ہے ۔
ایک خواہش بڑا معاملہ بنتی ہے ۔
جو ہمیشہ رہنے کے لیے کہتی ہے ۔
کوئی سالہا اور محنت کی خواہش کرتا ہے ۔
جیسے سمندر میں موتی اور جواہرات ہیں ۔
میں زندگی تیرے لیے خطرے میں ڈال سکتا ہوں ۔
لیکن موتی اور صرف یہ تیرے لیے ہیں ہے ۔

LIFE AND DEATH

Who says that Death will come? I will die.
I am the sun. I will melt into the river.

You will not listen to our urgent cries.
If you never hear me, I may be dead before you come.

Sadness and happiness, I hope for
But there is no cure for them.

Life is just like a delicate fish which flickers in the sea
Which rises and falls. Which is seen, then vanishes.

Life and Death

کون کہتا ہے موت آئے گی اور میں مر جاؤں گی
میں سورج ہوں جو سمندر میں غروب ہو جاؤں گی

تو سنے گا کبھی ہو نہ سکے گا
اگر تو نہ سنے تو ہے ممکن میں مر جاؤں گی

خوشی اور غم میں تیری خواہش ہے
لیکن ان کا کوئی علاج نہیں ۔

زندگی ایک نازک مچھلی کی طرح ہے
سمندر میں ابھرتی ڈوبتی نظر آتی ہے

Lesson 2

EVEN AMIDST ALL THIS SADNESS

A ghazal by Ghalib Mirza

Even amidst all this sadness, I remember
God's prayer.
For a holy man's worry beads, a smile I can
spare.

My restless mind is finding comfort in these
verses
Words cast a spell to soothe my raging spirit.

Oh God, why does my mind go on such a
long journey
When I am bound by heavy chains to these
prison walls

My heart aches for the light. My eyes search
for a few grains of hope.
My desire for life cuts me more than the
executioner's blade.

THE PASSIONATE MAN'S PILGRIMAGE

A poem by Sir Walter Raleigh

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer,
No other balm will there be given,
Whilst my soul, like a white palmer,
Travels to the land of heaven,
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains,
And there I'll kiss
The bowl of bliss,
And drink my everlasting fill
On every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before,
But after it will thirst no more.

We followed the same process as before:

- We provided a glossary of words for both poems
- In pairs, we divided up the poems and asked pupils to highlight the best or strongest images
- From the feedback, the pupils tried to unravel the meanings and the common ideas

As a class we talked for some time about the feelings they might have in prison while awaiting execution the next morning. We identified the common preoccupations of both poets: the feeling of loss and the hope for a better existence in the afterlife.

One pupil noticed a remarkable link between some of the images in Sir Walter Raleigh's poem and those of Paradise in the Holy Quoran, e.g. 'nectar fountains' and 'milken hills'.

In fours, pupils were asked to compose whole 'ghazals' based upon their previous selection of words and images from the two poems, and their discussion about 'death and loss'. Each pupil had the responsibility of owning at least one line.

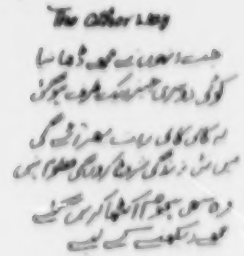
Examples of Ghazals written by Pupils

THE OTHER WAY

When they cover me up
Will there be anything on the other side?

This black, black night will be the last,
And I must start a new journey to I know not where.

They will collect in their crowds
To watch my life going the other way.

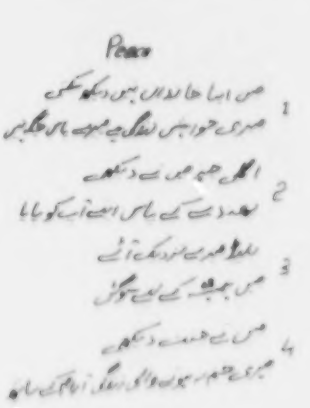


PEACE

My family, I cannot see.
I desire life. I now have no place to hide.
No time to spare.

The next thing I see
I am taken to the scaffold,
Bound and chained.
And the blade comes down.
I am asleep for ever and ever.

I see Heaven and
My never-ending life
Rests in peace.

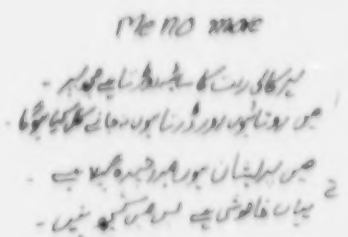


ME NO MORE

The thick darkness, a shadow runs through me.
The quiet is here.... me no more.

The thick darkness, a shadow cuts through me.
I am screaming.

I am terrified. My face is wet.
The quiet is here .... me no more.



English Scheme of Work

Due to the success of this work we have integrated this module for teaching bilingual poetry into the medium term planning for the Year 8 scheme of work. This structure for the module and lesson plans have been used to teach other examples of poetry. Our most recent example links the shared ideas and imagery in a ghazal by the twentieth century Pakistani poet, Iqbal, with an extract from Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey'.

Subject ENGLISH Title GHAZALS - Classical and Contemporary Urdu Poems Year Group 8

Learning Objectives	Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities	Assessment	PoS	Resources
Understand the structure of a ghazal (the most popular Urdu poetic form)	**Labelling:** In pairs provide a heading for each of the verses - working towards understanding a common idea or strand in the ghazal.	Did the headings show an understanding of underlying ideas in the verses?	EN - S&L 1(a) (b) 2 (a) (b)	Moghal Poet, Ghalib Mirza Contemporary Urdu poet, Iqbal
Access the language, ideas and imagery of some * ghazals written by famous Urdu poets, both classical and more contemporary, in Urdu and English.	**Highlighting:** In pairs / groups highlight the strongest images in the verses.	Did the selection of images help make sense of the ghazal?	EN - R 1(a) (b) (c) (d) 2 (a) (c) (d)	Walter Raleigh, 'Pilgrimage' linking with the themes of 'prison' and 'death' in Ghalib's ghazal.
Unravel the underlying meanings of these ghazals and identify their use of imagery, metaphor, alliteration and simile.	**Composition:** Using the images selected in pairs write one's own verses, in Urdu and English - a verse each.	How effectively did the ghazals composed by the pupils communicate to an audience?	EN- W 1 (a) (b) (c) 2 (b) 3 (a) (b) (c)	Wordsworth, extract from 'Tintern Abbey' linking with the themes of 'natural beauty', 'manmade creations', and 'spirit and body' in Iqbals' ghazal.
Using these ghazals as stimulus compose some of their own.	In large groups pool and share these compositions. Use them as a basis for writing a whole ghazal.	Did the compositions follow the structure of a ghazal?		Parveen Sayyad Fana, contemporary Urdu poet, linked to a sonnet of Shakespeare, focus more on human than divine love.
Compare 'the ghazal' with European poetic forms written by well known poets.	**Recital:** Poetry reading of group ghazals.			
	Using the same process, work on an which shares a common theme with the ghazal and deals with similar issues.	Could the pupils recognise and compare the common themes and images?		

KEY OUTCOMES

Curriculum Objectives	Pupil Outcomes	Teacher Outcomes
Inspire high quality creative writing in poetry	• Pupils were able to understand and express abstract philosophical ideas in poetic language. • The best writing conveyed a strong spiritual awareness and a profoundly felt sense of the human condition.	• Teachers have developed an effective strategy for focusing, guiding and developing pupils response to poetry.
Use both Urdu and English spoken and written forms	• Pupils were able to use and enjoy their spoken Urdu to help them understand and appreciate a poem. • Pupils were able to perform poems in public in school and at teacher in-service training events, using both Urdu and English. • Working at a high level in Urdu forced pupils to consider an equally appropriate word in English, thereby extending their vocabulary.	• Teachers have matched English and Urdu texts to develop comparative work on poems. • Teachers have used Urdu texts to create formal opportunities for reading aloud in English and Urdu. • Drawing on pupils' knowledge of two languages contributed to the depth of response and expression. • A teacher role model of Urdu helps to break the ice, encourages the reading out loud of Urdu texts and pupils' own work, and provides a realistic assessment of the level and use of Urdu.
Work within a specific poetic form	• All pupils developed their understanding of the ghazal form. • They were able to reconstruct the ghazal form with appropriate themes and structure using their own words and images.	• We have successfully used strategies for 'scaffolding' the reading and reconstructing of poetic forms. • The creative act of expressing themselves within the particular form, has increased pupils' understanding and appreciation of poetry.
Build links between Urdu and English classical texts	• Pupils were able to appreciate the common humanity and expression of poets working in different languages and cultures.	• The impact of successfully using material from the Indian and Pakistani classical tradition has contributed significantly to pupils knowledge and self esteem.

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Urdu Poetry collections are available from The Multicultural Bookshop, Rolex Trading Company, Rashid House, Westgate, Bradford BD1 3AA. Tel: 01274 731908

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD CITY OF LITERACY

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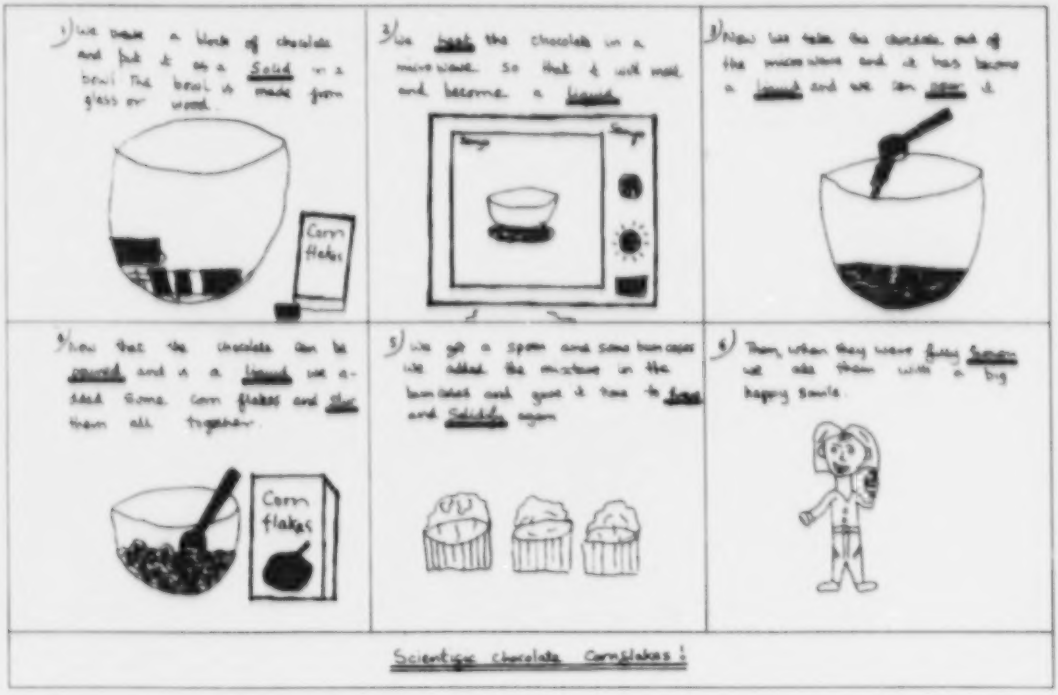
UNDERSTANDING AND WRITING NON-FICTION TEXTS

PAULINE MITCHELL, WHETLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

AIM *To improve standards of literacy by enhancing the range of strategies for accessing text.*



Background

The school's Ofsted report in 1994 expressed concern about the limited range of teaching styles and underachievement in literacy which affected standards across the curriculum. The AIMS project provided an opportunity to develop strategies to address these issues and to raise standards of attainment.

The school AIMS project began by gathering information, from LEA and other sources, about teaching strategies used to improve pupils' access to information in Science, History and Geography. A staff booklet was produced showing:

- what behaviours are associated with a good learner
- how modelling and scaffolding support learning
- how we can lead pupils towards becoming independent learners.

Ideas were successfully trialled in Science, History and Geography and we decided to build upon and disseminate this expertise, to further develop effective teaching and learning.

Objectives

In order to successfully implement these strategies and measure the effectiveness of the project within the school we needed a clear focus with a much tighter structure. A set of objectives were produced and the AIMS project became an integral part of the school development plan.

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The objectives were to:

- Improve standards of literacy by enabling pupils to access text more effectively and in a structured context.
- Give support and guidance to teachers in the use of strategies to access texts effectively.
- Increase expertise in a range of teaching styles.
- Use modelling, coaching and scaffolding to show pupils what it is to be a good learner.
- Change pupils learning behaviours when handling text.
- Consolidate the work already begun.

In the school development plan, measuring the success of the project was considered to be extremely important. The criteria for success were:

- All staff have an increased awareness of the demands made on learners by different types of text.
- More confident use of strategies by key personnel.
- Evidence of the use of these strategies in school planners.
- Pupils beginning to use these strategies when handling text, to support and improve their learning.
- Improved reading ages and pupil self esteem.

A project action plan was produced as part of the school development plan. The aim was to improve standards of literacy by enabling pupils to access text more effectively across the curriculum. This endorsement by the senior management team gave the project a high profile within the school and provided encouragement to the staff involved.

The school development plan stated the plan of action clearly, included details about funding, the INSET needs of the staff involved, how data would be gathered and how the project would be monitored. A timescale and action plan were agreed upon by the staff involved and the first baseline assessments were measured. Meetings were used to plan the schedules for the development of teacher partnerships and for making baseline teacher observations. It was decided to keep the AIMS work within science, history and geography to allow time for the staff involved to observe

Teacher Plan - Accessing Text

Time	Content learning outcomes.	Organisation group, pairs etc	Resources
5 mins	modelling – how to find out if text is suitable to find out what things we like and do	whole group	O H P
5 mins	Pupils choose key words from text, then in pairs find the word things appear on	Pairs	large worksheet of text
5 mins	Modelling – how to find out information on specific topic in text	whole group individual	dictionaries, glossaries etc text
5 mins	Where do you key words in text help pupil to have a good time	whole group	text
15 mins	Pupils to link key words with others discuss why	whole group to join in table groups or pairs as appropriate	key words on paper
	Word finds – could be missing a large bit of information by the text	Small groups	on card
5 mins 5 mins	Book pupil to make up a sentence to give meaning of key word	individual	large strips of paper felt tips

Teacher Commentary

Teacher _____

Class _____ Date _____

Context. (What skills were the pupils asked to use when looking at a piece of text?)

Scanning text to find out if the material was suitable for task eg to find out about breathing. Identification of key words, re-reading, making up questions. Finding links between key words.

What techniques did you use to help pupils access text? (modelling, coaching, scaffolding)

Modelling using the O H P what a good learner does with a piece of text. How to find out if text is of value etc. coaching pupils when they find words leading towards them finding greater meaning.

Did you feel the pupils achieved what was required of them?

The pupils worked extremely hard and because there was a distinct purpose to the activity did achieve success. Each pupil could give one explanation of how the things worked and collectively the group could interpret the text.

Do you feel there was anything you could have done to improve the lesson?

The main difficulty is in the timing trying to ensure that the pupils sense the urgency to get things completed quickly. Obviously practicals such as this will improve with experience and use.

Observation Schedule Date ..... Class 6 GEOGRAPHY

	Time	Teacher Action, e.g. modelling/explaining instructing/praising	Pupils action (with Teacher assistance	Resources
Lesson aims and introduction	5-10	Recap - Praise for remembering. Intro - Letters given out.	Answer questions	Letter
Brainstorm/identifying What is known Generating questions	20	Reading praised. Letter read by teacher Asks questions. Tells pupils to choose most important words	In turn, pupils read letter, listening for the most important words in paragraph.	Rules to underline words.
Reading work with text e.g. Re-reading Checking comprehension Identifying key information Summarising/paraphrasing Searching for more meaning	30secs 10secs 5	Find words to do with people in para 2. words for weather Para 3. What is carried in boat?	Pupils underline words to do with people + weather Pupils write sentence about what is carried on boat	Rules. Coloured highlighter.
Response to text e.g. Talking about findings Writing a report Answering a question Making notes	10-15	Question. How do people use the river Niger? Read again. Give out fresh cards with key words. Find connections.	Pupils underline Identify words on cards in text. Pupils link words on cards in small groups.	Time limit
Review of reading strategies. What behaviours have we used?	5-10	Assess for and Shows connections. Worksheet cloze activity	Pupils demonstrate connections. Answer Qs Do cloze activity	worksheet

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some of the strategies in use before attempting to use them within their own subjects. This also allowed the staff involved time to plan more effectively and reflect on the outcomes. The staff were asked to use a new type of lesson plan which, if used effectively, ensured that a lesson had more pace.

In the early stages of this project, it was recognised that although teachers were using a range of strategies there was little or no tangible evidence. To ensure that the evidence was less ephemeral new formats were introduced to help address this weakness. Baseline teacher observations with key personnel were gathered and have been used as a basis of evidence. When teachers have observed each other in teacher partnerships the observation sheets have been used as a tool to identify strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of strategies. Positive and supportive feedback at the end of such lessons has provided helpful and practical suggestions and created a feeling of true partnership.

In the school development plan we made a commitment to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. This meant that both quantitative and qualitative data had to be collected at different stages during the project. In order to have qualitative evidence it was decided to target Year 6, as the pupils could be measured on their performance in the SATS tests, the Bradford Indicator Project tests and on their reading ages at the beginning and end of the project. The qualitative evidence came from questionnaires given to the target group and teacher commentaries, observation schedules and evaluation sheets. The baseline reading ages have been compared to the national averages and show that a large percentage of the target group fall well below the norm.

Space

The Sun

The Sun is orange and yellow the sun gives heat and light The Sun is 93 million miles away the sun is made out of burning gases The Sun is a star

The Earth

The earth takes 24 hours to spin round once the Earth is round like a ball the Earth takes 365 and a ¼ days to travel around the Sun

The moon

The moon is a half moon or a full moon the moon REflects the light from the sun Paces go to the moon in a rocket

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

One of the main aims of the project has been to effect a change in the pupils' learning behaviours when handling text and the way staff present their lessons. The staff have used a wide variety of strategies and they have often adapted ideas to meet the needs of the pupils and their own teaching styles. Certain strategies have proved to be more successful and popular than others.

DICTAGLOSS

The use of a dictagloss has proved to be a valuable tool in improving pupils listening skills and encouraging them to reconstruct text. If the pupils are given a sequenced list of key words they can use this to produce an independent piece of writing and it can help them to gain a better understanding of the original text. In the one example, a pupil had written an account of a Greek trireme using a selected list of key words. The comments from the teacher showed that this child had listened well and had been able to grasp the meaning of the original text.

Use this framework to help you with your report.

A Report on the State of the Catholic Church in 1500 by Your Name

In this report I will describe the state of the Catholic Church using evidence gathered during visits to several churches and by speaking to Catholics.

To begin with I will find out about Catholic beliefs to see if they are still strong. Then I will look at gifts given to the Church and examine wills of dead Catholics to see if this can help me in my report.

It is evident that people have strong religious beliefs because .....

.....

In this paragraph mention Catholic rituals and say why they are so important. Also Purgatory and Indulgencies.

When I visited Melford church in 1529 I noticed

.....

In this paragraph mention what gifts Catholics gave to the church and why they gave them.

In the will of Richard Berne it is noted that he .....

.....

In this paragraph say why Richard behaved the way he did.

To conclude this report I would suggest that .....

.....

In this final paragraph try to draw all your ideas together. End by saying whether the Catholic Church was still a very strong influence in the lives of many people.

A dictagloss can be a very useful tool for a lower ability child. This piece of science writing about space is one of the first pieces of independent writing this child has produced. It also shows that the child has grasped some of the key science ideas.

If a dictagloss is used in conjunction with a writing frame, it can extend the amount of writing a pupil produces. In the next example, the pupil used the writing frame to help write an account of the Catholic Church in 1500.

MNEMONICS (A PHRASE TO HELP YOU REMEMBER FACTS)

In science the use of mnemonics to help remember sequenced facts has proved successful. If the pupils work in groups and have access to dictionaries and thesauri they can often come up with some original ways of remembering scientific facts. This activity also makes the pupils think carefully about how the words fit together because it is very easy to find suitable words but not as easy to make up a sentence that makes sense and is easily remembered. Year 8 pupils, for example, made up mnemonics to help them remember the colour sequence of the spectrum.

HIGHLIGHTING TEXT

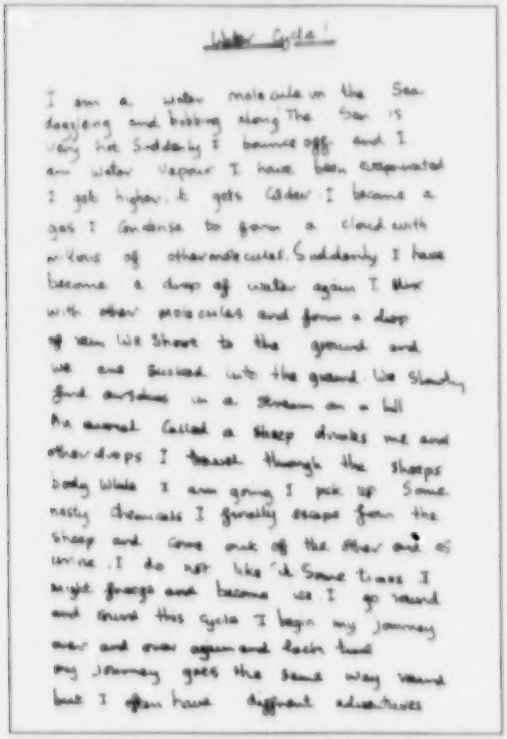
In all three subjects involved in the AIMS project, getting pupils to highlight the text has been useful. The pupils have been encouraged to make up questions about the text and to try to answer each others questions. If this information is then copied onto strips of paper and put on display it can provide a valuable resource in the classroom. In Science, pupils are often asked to choose key words from the text. If these key words are then placed onto a piece of card and distributed to the group, the pupils can be asked to think of ways of combining their word with others. This provides a good opportunity to think about the meanings of words and to have an chance to interact with each other and the text.

DIAGRAMS

Sometimes the pupils are asked to present written information in the form of diagrams. Again, this can help to show if a pupil has understood the meaning of the text.For example, pupils were asked to present some written instructions as a set of diagrams

showing some of the scientific changes taking place when making cakes out of chocolate and cornflakes

In Science, ideas can often be presented as a set of diagrams and it can be useful to get the pupils to present this information as a story. This allows the pupils a chance to be more creative while still giving evidence of scientific knowledge. This idea was tried successfully with Year 6 pupils who were trying to explain the water cycle.



Water Cycle

I am a water molecule in the Sea. Slopping and bobbing along The Sea is very hot Suddenly I bounce off and I am water Vapour I have been evaporated I get higher & higher it gets colder I become a gas I Condense to form a cloud with millions of other molecules. Suddenly I have become a drop of water again I then with other molecules and form a drop of rain We shoot to the ground and we are sucked into the ground We slowly find ourselves in a Stream on a hill An animal Called a Sheep drinks me and other drops I travel through the Sheeps body While I am going I pick up Some nasty chemicals I finally escape from the Sheep and Come out of the other end as urine. I do not like it Some times I might freeze and become ice I go round and round this cycle I begin my journey over and over again and again and my journey goes the same way round but I often have different adventures

The project has improved teaching and learning in significant ways. Teachers have increased their confidence and skills in using strategies for enabling pupils to understand the meaning of subject texts. Pupils themselves have also learnt strategies for tackling the meaning of texts and they have more understanding of and confidence in their own learning skills. As a school we have we have made significant progress in establishing these practices through whole school policies and subject planning. So far we have limited evidence of the effect of these strategies on pupil achievement. We have however gathered data which indicates that this work has had a significant impact on raising attainment in Science.

[redacted]

As not all staff have been involved in this initial project, a group from within Year 6 have been monitored in Science in order to measure the effect the project has had on raising levels of attainment. Progress was measured over five months.Two groups of children were selected, a project group and a control group. The project group had four lessons a week in which they experienced lots of strategies to help them with text. The other group did not have any help with text apart from the odd lesson.

A baseline measurement of National Curriculum levels showed that at the beginning of the project both groups were parallel in ability.

January 1997

Baseline Assessment Using KS2 Science Test Papers for 1996.	Project Group - 21 children	Control Group - 22 children
Level 5	0	0
Level 4	3	1
Level 3	18	21

May 1997

KS2 Science Test Results for 1997.	Project Group --	Control Group - 2 absent
Level 5	1	0
Level 4	16	10
Level 3	4	10

The staff involved in this project have all added a new range of teaching styles to their repertoires and when the project was observed as part of a schematic review by the Local Education Authority it was judged to be an effective strategy for raising standards within the school. The project is still being implemented and developed and the findings from current work will be useful in planning the next phase. We plan to extend the project to the other areas of the curriculum and to ensure that all the staff are given full access to the information and ideas.

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KEY OUTCOMES

Success Criteria	Pre Project	Post Project
Enable pupils to access text more effectively	• Pupils have limited strategies to use when faced with unfamiliar text. Of the list of strategies the pupils could choose they often only ticked one box • In a baseline qualitative questionnaire the majority of pupils admitted to a heavy reliance on teacher input. Some simply admitted that they would give up on the text.	• Pupils are now aware of and use a range of strategies. • Pupils now use friends as experts, ask adults, use dictionaries and thesaurus, read on for inference, highlight and identify key words and begin to hypothesise on their meaning.
Provide guidance to teachers on strategies for accessing texts	• Staff had been criticised in an Ofsted inspection for the limited range of teaching styles. However, staff felt they had no access to ideas for new ways to access text.	• The first action was to provide a staff handbook which illustrated a range of classroom strategies. • These strategies were successfully trialled in Science. These were applied more widely through teacher partnerships and observation of these strategies used in History and Science. • Whole school in-service sessions have been run. • Other schools have been informed through cross phase and subject liaison meetings and staff from those schools have visited to observe lessons.
Use modelling, coaching and scaffolding	• Staff are generally unaware of the need to show pupils how to be a good learner. • Although staff are aware of the difficulties encountered by pupils little was done to show them how to be successful. • The expectations of many staff were unrealistically high.	• Staff have a greater awareness of the need to demonstrate good learning: they give examples of how to do and what they do as adults when faced with new text. • Staff have more skill and confidence in using modelling and coaching techniques. • 60% of staff now use modelling and believe that it is an effective tool to raise achievement.
Change pupils' learning behaviours when handling text	• Pupils waited for teacher input when given new text and would continually ask what to do. • Pupils lack confidence when handling text. • Pupils are unable to take notes from text and simply copy chunks of information.	• Pupils are able to use strategies to help them find meaning within text and they have become less reliant on the teacher. • Pupils show more confidence and can use a variety of texts. • Pupils can pick out and highlight key words and are able to reconstruct text to show meaning.
Consolidate work done	• The school had no policy on how to help pupils handle text. Staff worked independently and were exclusively concerned with subject requirements. • Planning showed no evidence of how subjects were tackling the problems of how to help children access text.	• The project has become an important part of the school's development policy and staff are all aware of the need to raise achievement and to provide pupils with help in handling text. • All staff are aware of the range of strategies available and these have been introduced into individual subject planning files for use across the curriculum. Short term lesson plans now show how and which strategies will be used.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

This case study was edited by Bernard Campbell and is one of a series produced by the Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project.
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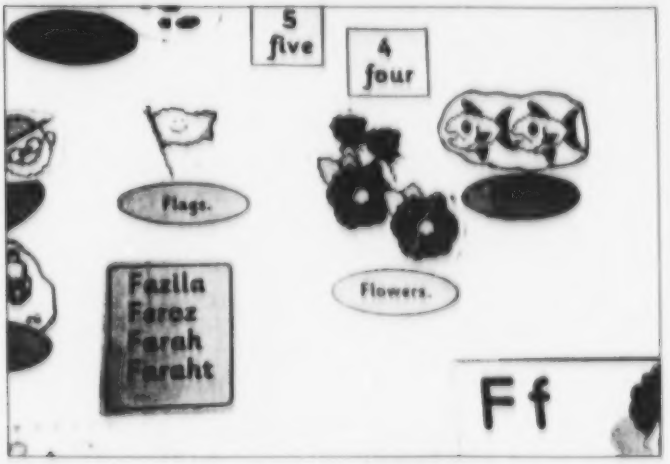
DEVELOPING THE LITERACY HOUR

BARBARA BRIGGS, GRANGE ROAD FIRST SCHOOL

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

AIM *To develop a structured approach to teaching literacy..*



Introduction

Grange Road is a large first school with 442 children (including 80 part time Nursery children) 99% of whom are bilingual learners. Most of our children have limited access to role models outside school to enhance their English language development. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of reading and our expectations have always been high. However, we were concerned that some children were neither reading for meaning, nor developing good grammatical use of the English language.

Prior to introducing the Literacy Hour, we had:

- re-organised reading by putting together book boxes of graded reading books including some reading scheme material.
- abandoned our main scheme Link Up in favour of books with a more realistic text such as Oxford Reading Tree and Sunshine Spirals.

Most staff were happy with these changes, however we felt the need for a more structured approach. In order to help the children develop good English we decided to work together to develop a more refined methodology for the teaching of reading.

AIMS

- To extend the knowledge and skills about teaching and learning language throughout school.
- To develop a structured linguistic programme based within National Curriculum requirements.
- Train all staff including Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Classroom Assistants, and as many parents as possible.

We quickly realised that this ambitious project would have to be broken down into small steps which could build on existing practice. We carried out some research to find out exactly how language development was organised in Key Stage 1. We found that although the teachers were aware of the need to provide opportunities for the children to develop English it tended to be topic based and not closely linked with the teaching of reading and writing. We also found that the teaching of reading was largely limited to hearing the children on an individual 1:1 basis. This was time consuming and varied in its effectiveness depending on the member of staff.

At this point, in May 1995, we decided to clarify our objectives and develop a plan of action.

ACTION PLAN

- Use the AIMS money to buy in a former Reading Recovery Teacher, who had worked in our school previously and already knew many families.
- Pilot the Literacy Hour in the two Reception classes where we would develop structured language through the literacy skills of reading and writing.
- Increase opportunities for children to:
  a) hear book language
  b) read simple, meaningful text with strong structures
  c) enhance their reading skills and structures by talking about the book
  d) begin to write independently.

The Staff involved in the Literacy Hour pilot were the Aims Co-ordinator (also the Deputy Head and Reception Co-ordinator), the Reading Recovery teacher, two Reception teachers, two Nursery Nurses and a bilingual Classroom Assistant.

Diary of the Literacy Hour

MAY AND JUNE 1995

Our Reading Recovery expert, Cath Robinson, worked with all the staff in Reception to develop teaching methodology and skills. She worked 2 days a week with 8 staff on an individual basis. The member of staff was released from class to observe Cath listening to readers and this was followed up by explanations, questions and discussion. The following day the trainee heard the readers and made brief notes on where each child needed most help. Cath observed and provided feedback and guidance. These sessions were repeated several times and the Reception team were able to write guidelines for reading and writing by the end of the third week. Cath Robinson also spent some time developing the children's writing skills alongside their reading development. All the staff had opportunity to observe this.

These sessions immediately improved the diagnostic skills of staff when hearing reading and extended their strategies for developing children's reading competence. Two months after our first meeting, staff were already more confident in the teaching of reading and writing and the children were already developing more strategies for accessing text. These children are now in Year 2 and there has been a big improvement in the overall reading scores in SATs and in other diagnostic Reading Tests.

JULY 1995

It became increasingly evident that all the children needed some structured reading input every day, so our next step was to draw up a format for the whole class teaching of reading. The Reception team agreed to try out several items that we thought were crucial to the development of the children's reading.

- We made some Big Books with enlarged text using key words and based on the children's interests.
- We targeted high frequency words.
- We pointed out punctuation.
- We targeted initial letter sounds.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1995

We consolidated our work and extended it to Year 1. Staff in Year 1 were released to observe Reception teachers and Cath Robinson was available for advice.

We realised that the grading of the book boxes was not fine enough for what we were doing now, so we re-graded all the book boxes in Key Stage 1, and involved Year 2 staff. The re-grading of books involved visits to other classrooms and it became apparent that we needed to draw up guidelines for teaching the early stages of literacy. We produced the document, 'Guide to the Early Stages of Literacy' which included advice on classroom display, formal teaching input, use of big books, starting writing and hearing children read.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1995

When the Reception classes were settled in, we started to formulate literacy activities that the children could do every day. These activities became the basis of our Literacy Hour. We found that by planning a week's differentiated activities, we could be sure that all the children had the opportunity to develop or practise the necessary literacy skills every day. The checklist and the resources were evolved by constantly evaluating their effectiveness and making improvements accordingly. By the end of December, we were confident enough to share our ideas with Years 1 and 2, who were pleased to try it in their classes in a small way.

JANUARY TO MARCH 1996

During this time there were two major influences on our project. We read about the "Lift Off to Literacy" scheme and the Big Book approach to the whole class teaching of reading. We embarked on both these approaches and wanted to know more. We asked questions, read up, attended demonstrations and were then able to adopt some of them into our practice.

MARCH TO JULY 1996

We refined our planning for the Literacy Hour but were delayed in implementing it by staff changes. The training had to start again. Extra money from Governors enabled us to buy more Big Books.

SEPTEMBER 1996

The children coming into school had much improved reading skills which we felt was due to them having had a whole class reading session every day in the Nursery. At an INSET session we demonstrated: whole class teaching of reading using enlarged text, magnetic board and letters, flash cards, and alphabet songs. Staff were asked to plan how best to use these methods in their own age groups. The response was excellent and by Christmas 1996 the whole school had implemented a Literacy Hour which included the whole class reading session. We are now part of the Numeracy project and are required to provide Maths sessions in a similar format. Our children have responded well because they were already trained in this method of learning.

JANUARY - JUNE 1997

We have assembled a book 'The Teaching of Reading in Grange Road First School' for parents and a more detailed version for staff. We have made a video which demonstrates the whole class teaching of reading and received visitors from other interested schools. We have involved some parents through the Better Reading Partnership and plan to run workshops next year. A family has donated a gift of £200 to enable us to buy more Big Books for use throughout the school. The school language policy and guidelines has been re-written in the light of the AIMS project.

THE FUTURE

Our plans for next year are to keep the whole process going, write up and present all the information that we have gathered and involve more parents.

Evaluation.

We have reviewed and evaluated the project constantly at year group and whole school meetings and through the use of standard reading tests, Primary Indicator Project Baseline Assessment and End of Key Stage assessments.

Since starting the AIMS project we have recorded significant improvement in literacy skills:

- Almost all the children are showing a keener interest and enjoyment in books.
- The children are developing a much more detailed knowledge about books and we frequently hear them using words like "author", "illustrator" and "publisher".
- Children are making fewer grammatical errors and are much more confident when speaking in English.
- The Early Years children are developing independent writing skills and use of punctuation at a much earlier age and their speaking and listening skills have improved.

EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT

We carried out the Primary Indicators Project baseline assessment during 1996 and 1997. This indicated areas of weakness that we were able to address during the Literacy Hour in Reception. Most noticeable was the children's inability to recognise rhyming words. From the September and January intake only 2 children scored in the rhyming section. At the end of the year 58 out of 64 children scored in this area and a third of the children received full marks. In September 1997, when we tested the new intake into school, almost half the children were able to identify rhyming words and two children scored full marks. We feel that this was due to the additional input from their literacy carpet sessions in nursery.

Using the Reading Recovery Assessment, the same cohort of 78 pupils were tested at the end of Reception in 1995 and again in 1997. The results showed significantly above average improvements in children's reading over a two year period.

78 Children Tested in Reading	*End of Reception 1995*	*End of Year 2 1997*
Below Chronological Age	53%	10%
Within their Chronological Age	44%	62%
Above their Chronological Age	13%	28%

END OF KEY STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT

The Year 2 children taking the 1997 Key Stage 1 tests were in reception when we started the AIMS Project and consequently have had the benefit of a more structured literacy input over two years. End of Key Stage 1 assessment showed significant improvements in the Teacher Assessment results in English from 1996 to 1997. While the results show an overall improvement across all the language skills it is also notable that there has been a significant rise in the percentage at level 3 in reading from 10% to 40% while the percentage at level 3 in writing has as yet remained low. This remains an area for development.

KS1 Level 2 +	*1996*	*1997*
Speaking and Listening	58%	71%
Reading	56%	75%
Writing	54%	77%
ENGLISH	56%	74%

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Guide to the Early Stages of Literacy

MEANING, STRUCTURE AND VISUAL INFORMATION

We use all three sources of information when we read. We check one against the other to confirm what we think. For beginners, the first source of meaning is the picture. The text must also make sense. The structure of the language helps us to predict what a word might be. Visual information (the letters) helps us to confirm what we think, and to work out an unknown word.

We want children to use all these strategies. Each child learns to read in their own way, but all children need to use all the strategies. They will seem to learn in a random way. To use the meaning is the most important strategy, but they will be hindered in their progress if they do not quickly acquire control of some visual information e.g. most of the letters and some familiar, high frequency words. Second language learners need more time to establish language structures, but this happens quickly as they read well structured, basic texts.

A Reading Lesson (Use of Big Book) and a Writing Lesson (construction of text, as in the following examples) should be given every day. Ways must be found of teaching the familiar words and the alphabet as quickly as possible. Once a child has control of some words and letters, he finds learning more words and letters easier. He can begin to use the words and letter patterns (Visual Information) to cross check with the picture (Meaning) and the sound of the language (Structure).

TEACHING READING

Prompting children to read

- To find out what they can already do.
- To help them to do more.

Orientate the book first. Know the book before you introduce it. Give the child a simple overview. He needs to have the meaning of the text in his head before he reads it. If the child stops wait until he has had a chance to self-correct. Praise him if he does or if he tries. Help him to use the meaning, structure and visual information, asking him questions like:

Does that make sense?" Does that sound right?" "Does that look right?"

Always praise the child for his efforts. If a child is having difficulty check that he has left to right movement and that he has one to one correspondence. Always give him the chance to be independent. It we correct a child who is reading to us before he has had a chance to use the strategies, we are depriving him of the chance to practise them.

If he fails to use the MEANING of the text, we can prompt him with,

"Did that make sense?" or, *"Look at the picture"*.

If he uses an incorrect STRUCTURE we can say,

"Can we say that?" or, *"Did that sound right?"* .

If he does not use VISUAL INFORMATION to correct a mistake, for example, *"a"* for *"the"*, we can say,

"Does that look like "a"?

Or, if he is not attending to the first letter of a word we can say

"Go back, and when you come to that word, say the first letter".

If a child does not read fluently, we say,

"Read it like talking,"

and praise him when he does. Fluency must be established and maintained from the start.

Story Time using a Big Book

The daily reading lesson often uses a Big Book. Introduce the Big Book at the beginning of the week, and re-read it each day. Read a rhyme or poem, written large, pointing to the words at fluency speed. Use the same text for a week. Use well structured texts, for example, Floppy's Bath (Oxford Reading Tree) or Smarty Pants (Story Chest). Use these books to teach: front cover of book, title, first word, first letter, left to right, one to one, word, picture, space, punctuation, key words, word patterns. Select teaching points according to the text and the needs of the children.

Example from **'Smarty Pants'**

I am a smarty pants
Rum turn tie.
Here is an aeroplane
See me fly

Draw attention to familiar words *(I, am, a, Here, is, me)*. Use the structure to get to *"fly"* and check for meaning (picture) and visual information (at this level, the first letter of *"fly"*.) In the early years, especially for second language learners, priority must be given to stories with a strong structure, and a story of this type should be read at least once a day.

Sometimes take a line of text and write it on a strip of card in large print, for example, *"I am a smarty pants"*. Show the children the text. Cut it up in front of them. Mix it up and arrange it in the right order with the children. This reinforces one to one and left to right.

Reading activities

These activities can be used every day: letter games, rhymes to teach the name and the sound of letters, word games, bingo, playdough, paint, sand, building up own alphabet book, writing familiar words, and using flash cards.

TEACHING WRITING

Starting writing

Children are expected to write from the start. They can write their name as they register each day.

The text which the teacher and children write every day provides powerful teaching opportunities.

Expect the children to have a try.

For example give the children give the sentence, *"I went to Morrison's"*. A child writes *"I"*. What comes next?" *"Went"* Say *"went"*, "Say it slowly *w -e - n - t*. Can you hear the first sound? Write it down. Can you hear another sound? etc. Who can write *"to"*? " A child writes *"to"*. Another child writes *"to"* and the teacher finishes it.

Key words

Children need to learn key words in order to learn to spell and read. Knowing high frequency words such as "I", "see", "the", "house", is necessary to develop fluency. Use a teacher's stand construct a sentence with high frequency words written on a card. Let the children try other words on empty card. Give the children lots of opportunity to practise words to fluency.

A sample writing lesson

"We are going to learn this word". Show flashcard *"and"*. "It's got three letters, *ay, en* and *dee"*.

Make the word in magnetic letters. Show how it blends together while moving the letters *a- n- d*.

"I'm going to write the word flow, starting with the ay - round, up and down. Everyone, show me how we write it - round, up and down."

"Now we'll write a sentence."

Have two smiling faces drawn on a sheet of paper. Choose two children who can write their name.

"Aisha and Umar are smiling." Aisha and Umar can come and write their own names.

Another child can write the *"a"* in *"and"*. The teacher writes *"are"*. A child can write the *"s"* and the teacher finishes *"smiling"*. A child can put in *the full stop*.

There is always something the child can contribute.

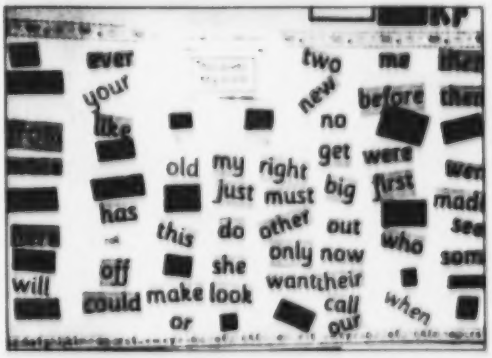
This piece of paper goes up on the wall and can be referred to at other times. The text can be read together with the teacher or child pointing at the words. From this exercise comes knowledge of: words, capitals, small letters, spaces, words, first, last, beginning, end, punctuation, one to one, left to right, letter formation, and rapidly builds confidence.

The cut-up sentence

This can be used to make big books, for example, Sonam is running, Habib is laughing, Uzma is crying.

The children can draw the picture and arrange the text which the teacher has written very clearly, and cut up in front of them, and then stick it into a big book. The children can make their own personal books on a smaller scale. The teacher writes the text as it must be very clear. Cut up sentences help the children with one to one, left to right, locating known words and looking for the first letter in a word.

THE CLASSROOM DISPLAY



The classroom should display the following:

Key words

The first 20 as flashcards (I, in, go, see, is, the, my, went, here, a, am, to, come, like, we, and, at, on, up, look, this, me). The children's names on registration cards and milk.

Letters

Upper and lower case, alphabet games and jigsaws.

Text from storytime

For example, 'The Hungry Caterpillar'

"The caterpillar ate a leaf. The caterpillar ate a cake. The caterpillar got fat. The caterpillar changed into a butterfly"

These texts can be rapidly constructed with the children, re-read, and replaced by new ones.

Texts written every day

Written with the children, workshop style, on display and re-read. Can be discarded at end of week or made into big books.

Literacy Hour in Reception - Guidelines

ACTIVITY	GROUPING
ONE TO ONE SHARING OF BOOKS • Reinforce use of picture, structure and phonics	Mainly individual, some group work
READ AND DRAW	Daily class job
WRITING KEY WORDS	Daily class job
SHARING BIG BOOKS • Awareness of punctuation • Prediction based on picture information • Recognition of key words	Daily carpet session
RECOGNITION OF KEY WORDS • lotto games • flash cards • wall display	Class and group activities
CLASS NEWS OR ALPHABET BOOK • Look at sentence construction • Difference between letters and words • Phonic sounds	Daily carpet session

ACTIVITY	GROUPING
PHONICS •Use pictures as a stimulus to identify and write initial letter sounds. •Use phonic work sheets •Make a class alphabet book	Class sessions and group work
MAKE BIG BOOKS •Sentence construction using cut up sentence technique •Key word recognition •Use for individual reading - accessible text •Practise one to one	Ability group work
DAILY DIARY •Write initial letter sounds •Write key words •First attempt at free writing	Daily job for Group 1
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY •Copy sentences on the computer •Reading and writing practice	Daily job for Group 1

KEY OUTCOMES

Aims Project Focus	Teaching Outcomes	Learning Outcomes
• To develop a structured approach to teaching literacy • To improve standards of reading and writing	• The depth of thinking about language, reading and writing has improved and teaching has become more focused. • Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Classroom Assistants have developed their diagnostic and teaching skills in reading and writing, using Reading Recovery methods. • Teaching of reading and writing is more targeted and specific. • Practical school guidelines have been developed and resources have been organised to enable staff to teach the Literacy Hour. • The sharing of information between staff has improved continuity and progression throughout the school. • The whole school now uses the Literacy Hour and finds it effective with all year groups.	• Pupils are developing their reading, independent writing, and use of punctuation at an earlier age than previously. • Children have more reasons to write. • Children have a more detailed knowledge about books and use appropriate terminology to explain texts. • Children are experiencing more structured grammar work than previously, which they enjoy. • Children entering school from Nursery have improved reading skills. Early Years children have considerably improved their ability to recognise rhymes. • End of Key Stage 1 English tests show significant improvement 1996 L2 + 56 % 1997 L2 + 74% • Reading Recovery Assessment at end of Reception and at the end of Year 2. 1995-R 53% below Chronological Age 1997-Y2 10% below Chronological Age.

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THE HIGHFIELD PARENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

JULES OFFORD, HIGHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

AIM *To raise achievement through research and development of the literacy partnership with parents.*

Proving the value of parent power

Shamar Yasin, of Skipton Road, Keighley, with her children Anmeen, 11 (left) and Shabina, two, with others involved in the scheme

Book parties in Asian homes are improving children's reading skills in a partnership between teachers at Highfield Middle School in Keighley, parents and pupils.

Already 50 mothers have taken part in sessions held in the style of Tupperware parties. And a group of a dozen fathers met at the school last week.

A third of families of the school's nine 11-year-olds are taking part. The scheme is part of Bradford Council's Talim Project which gets its name from the Urdu word for 'educate'.

The parties were the idea of Jules Offord, a language support teacher, and English teacher Carol Maxwell.

Highfield has had a home-reading club for several years in which pupils are encouraged to read aloud. However, listeners tend to be older brothers and sisters.

"We think the role of parents is essential in a child's learning and realised we needed to involve them more," explains Jules.

Carol says staff, recognising how daunting school can be for parents for whom English is not the first language, decided it would be better for them to go out into the community instead.

The cost of supply teachers to cover the home visits is being met by a government grant for work with ethnic minorities. As well as being shown selections of suitable books parents are given tips on how to show interest in their children's education and how to share reading sessions.

The parties are so popular that friends with children at other schools are joining in. And attendance has doubled at twice weekly basic English lessons held at the school for Asian women.

What happens at home has a major impact on how a child performs at school, says Jules. "People don't need to be able to speak English to support their children. They have many other skills which they can use.

We are using people's strengths. The partnership helps us all to bring our expertise into a child's learning."

Contact the school on 604101 for information on the scheme or the free English classes which are run by Keighley College or if you would like to provide books for the school library.

Celebrity at school, page 5
School news, page 7

Keighley News

Introduction

Highfield Middle School has nearly 400 pupils of whom 95% are from the local Asian community in Keighley. Many pupils enter school with a well below average reading age.

The Parent Partnership Project began in 1995 as a response to:

- Staff concerns about lack of visible parental involvement
- Recognition that some parents felt unable to support their child
- The views of some pupils that parents could not help them because they were not fluent speakers and readers of English.

The project built on previous initiatives to involve parents which had achieved some degree of success. For example, a Year 5 project had been run to broaden pupils' horizons and to engage parents in the school.

Over the school year, all year 5 pupils went on local visits, learnt board games, and took part in cookery and art projects. In addition pupils' mothers were invited to join in these sessions. The response varied but often a number of mothers, and their pre-school children, came and joined in. Partly as a result of these Friday afternoon sessions, demand grew for English classes. By coming into school these women had gradually felt more accepted and were able to take advantage of the educational opportunity offered.

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

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This project built on these school and community relationships to explore new ways of building and cementing closer, effective working relationships with parents and to extend our strategies for improving literacy. Support was provided through Bradford's Achievement in Multilingual Schools (AIMS) project which allowed us to plan and release staff to work with parents in the community that the school serves. The role of the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) and other bilingual staff was central to the planning and involvement of parents.

Objectives

We had the following objectives:

- To involve parents more directly in their child's school education by
  - Creating avenues for parents to show their children that they value education and desire high achievement
  - Changing the attitude of those pupils who feel that their parents cannot help.
- To increase teachers' knowledge and understanding about the language and cultural experiences of pupils
- To improve trust and mutual understanding through
  - Teachers learning how parents perceive their role
  - Learning what teachers can do to support parents
  - Providing advice and training for parents who wish to increase support for their child.

Action Research

We knew in broad terms what we wanted to achieve but we were unsure about what strategies would be most effective. We decided to undertake an "Action Research" approach in order to discover more about the problem before deciding what strategies to adopt. Our initial objective was to devise a plan which would improve our understanding parental attitudes to literacy and the role of the school. The project was initiated with the Language Support and Key Stage 2 Co-ordinators, Jean Lockwood and Carol Maxwell, and relied on the knowledge and bilingual skills of the Home School Liaison Officer and Section 11 staff, Hamida Aziz and Nasar Raja. It was agreed at the outset that whilst the long term aim was to involve the whole school, it was important to keep the management of the project to a small number of staff. We:

- Focused on Years 5 and 6.
- Involved class teachers and Section 11 staff who indicated an interest.

READING PARTNERSHIP

Highfield Middle School

Dear Parent

Our school invites you to take part in an exciting worthwhile partnership to enable you to work with us to improve your child's reading enjoyment and knowledge of books.

It is a known fact that children who are better readers generally achieve more in their education. Our plan is to work with you to build up your skills to enable you to work with your own child at home.

This project will include many varied and interesting activities and visits. You will have the opportunity to meet and work alongside teachers from school.

We hope that both Mums and Dads, Grandmas and Grandads, in fact any family member will wish to join in.

We intend to set up separate groups for men and women.

This is the only scheme in the Bradford area and therefore we hope you will support it as we are sure that like us you are concerned about your child's education and progress.

A knowledge of English is not essential as Punjabi speaking staff will be available to help us all.

on behalf of the Highfield Reading Partnership.

I would like to know more about the reading partnership designed to further my child's reading skills.

Signed _____

Child's Name _____ Class _____

READING PARTNERSHIP

Highfield Middle School

- Drafted and sent a letter to all families of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Wrote again to those families who expressed an interest, inviting them to an informal "interview".
- Used the information from meetings with parents and parallel interviews with pupils to develop the second stage of the project.

The Interview Process

We interviewed over 50 parents and their children (over 35% of the key stage cohort). We offered the parents a choice of venue for the "interview". The majority took place in their home, although some came to school and a few took place in a local community centre. All interviews were attended by a bilingual member of staff to ensure that the dialogue could be as full and meaningful as possible.

Although home visits were a time consuming activity the benefits were clear for all involved. Several staff took part in this process and found it a valuable learning experience. They gained an appreciation of the children's home experiences, the language and literacy they brought with them from home and, as a project group we began to build an understanding of children's learning outside school. Most importantly, because the parents felt more at ease in their own home, we gained an insight into how parents valued their child's learning and the role they felt they had in it. The interviews had a standard format which helped us to explore the following areas:

- Opportunities in the home environment for reading and learning.
- What parents wanted from us to help them support their children.
- How we could work together.

The data was collated and analysed to provide a detailed picture about pupils learning experiences outside school, and about the use and appreciation of books in the home.

We used the views and requests of parents to inform the shape ot the project. We believed that schools had often told parents what they wanted them to do as a way of helping support their child's learning. We wanted to find out what parents thought they could do and to support them in achieving this. The project in this sense is all about empowerment. The most important thing we learnt was that it was necessary for the next stage of the project to be focused in the community.

Parents' Capacity to Support Learning

Our initial research demonstrated that the vast majority of parents, principally mothers, did not believe that they could have a role to play in their child's learning because they were not able to read or write in English themselves. This tended to mirror the views expressed by many children who said that their parents could not help. "My mum can't help, she doesn't speak English!" was a common response.

We recognised that if we wanted to work collaboratively with parents we had to begin from where the parents were or, at least, perceived themselves to be. From our discussions we found that although parents said they were satisfactorily informed about their child's progress, in reality they had little understanding of the actual processes. Many also expressed an interest in seeing the kinds of books that were used.

From a pilot scheme with a small group of mothers we learnt that there was an important language barrier between school and home. Pupils could not explain to their parents in Punjabi or Bangla what they were learning in school in English. Therefore, however enthusiastic parents were to support their child they were often powerless as the process and concepts involved were completely outside of their own experiences. We realised that we needed to establish a greater area of common ground and to provide more information and explanation about how schools work and how children learn. We felt that the interest in books expressed by parents provided a good development opportunity.

Book Gatherings

We decided to organise gatherings in homes, inviting groups of women to look at a wide range of books. We wanted to increase mothers' ability and confidence to share and explore books while interacting with their children. A similar programme for fathers was hosted in school. The organisation of this activity was lengthy, and depended heavily on the Home-School Liaison Officer's knowledge of the community and her time and skill as a translator.

We identified a number of key households who we worked with to establish good relationships and to develop positive parental self esteem in relation to education. Once these target mothers felt aware and comfortable with their role as hosts we identified a number of other mothers who lived close by and arranged for them to be invited to a book gathering. We also encouraged the host to invite any of their family or who had children. We borrowed a large selection of books from Bradford Schools Library Service (Keighley branch) and augmented these with books from school.

Pupils in Year 6 also made bookmarks which were given to all participants at the gatherings.

At each session two women teachers plus a bilingual member of staff sat with the group of mothers looking at and discussing the books. The session began with a welcome and introduction before the business part. However most of the time was set aside for a relaxed, interactive look at the books with talk, tea and biscuits: in fact, similar to an ordinary social occasion. The women were able to exchange ideas with each other and ask questions in an atmosphere which was more a chat with friends than a formal lecture. We tried to present the gatherings as - "Finding out about my child's learning can be fun for me!" In reality, these sessions were a continuation of our research. As well as providing an initial insight for mothers they helped staff gain new understanding and to develop new skills.

Key factors for success:

- Women gathering at each others homes for "a women's" event was traditional and therefore not threatening.
- The structure of the sessions was recognisable to all - welcome, introduction, business, then a social chat.
- Being a large(ish) group meant that women felt less threatened by their lack of English and/or literacy in English and/or Urdu/Bangla.
- School staff evidently needed the mothers help as we were the ones outside of our usual environment and in a minority as to understanding the common language of the gathering. In a positive way, control was with the women and this undoubtedly gave them confidence.
- We were able to involve a large number of staff on a rolling programme, ensuring that each time one person had already been involved in facilitating a gathering.

From all points of view there appeared to be significant benefits gained from the Book Gathering.

- For a number of women it was the first time that they had opportunity to look at such a range and variety of books.
- Using library books meant that mothers could borrow them from the library creating some continuity and familiarity.
- It increased the confidence of staff working with parents despite the fact that they had no Urdu/Punjabi/Bangla.
- **Although the focus was books it showed that all involved had similar educational hopes and aspirations for their families irrespective of religion and culture.**
- It improved relationships between families and staff and, especially, between pupils and teachers.
- Staff awareness and expertise were enhanced.
- Because the situation was relaxed and informal staff gained a far greater insight into children's home literacy than we had through the interviews.
- The parents (both mums and dads) provided us with the next development of the project by indicating what they needed.

So far there have now been 10 gatherings which have been attended by about 100 mothers or fathers. They attracted women and men of all ages, not all with pupils at Highfield. A particular goal was to involve and support the small number of Bangladeshi families who send their children to Highfield. Initially Bangladeshi families were reticent to participate, a reflection, we felt, of our inability to offer a Bangla speaking adult as translator. With the support of Nurjahan Ali, the Education Development Worker from Bangladesh Porishad we identified a mother to act as host and organised a successful gathering attended by a woman member from the majority of families with children in school. She feels that the particular strengths of the project are that:

- "Most parents want to support their child but they lack of knowledge of the ever changing school system and need advice about how to be involved."
- "The structure of the project provides parents and staff with opportunities to introduce ideas and share experiences."
- "Working with families changes children's perceptions and helps them to realise that their parents are interested and want their child to achieve."

Library Visits

From the interview data and as a result of the gatherings it became clear that very few project parents had ever been to the library with their children or taken them to buy them a book. If children went to the library it was with an older sibling, although many believed that in Years 5 and 6 they were still too young. Although a significant number of children had bought books this had mostly occurred at school fairs or tended to be academic books

which were intended to advance their learning. These were often too complex. There was a pervading view that "hard" books were good! Parents, especially mothers, felt ill equipped to make informed choices for their child.

We negotiated with Keighley Library to run induction sessions for parents. We also talked to Keighley's two book shops and arranged for visits to take place. We took several groups of parents on a library/book shop visit to introduce them to how they could participate in this aspect of their child's literacy experience. We wanted to help parents understand that reading was more than books and that wider experience of text could improve their reading. We also wanted to promote the concept that reading should be fun and that having "hard" books didn't necessarily equate to better readers.

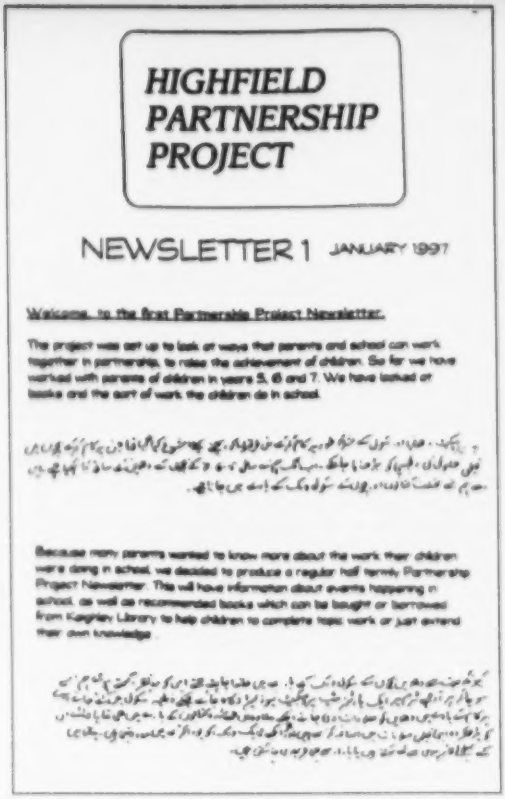
The Partnership Project Newsletter

The idea behind the newsletter was to provide parents with information about what was happening in school and to identify and promote certain books that could be bought through the book shops or loaned from the library. We have focused on topic-related and story books suitable for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The parents involved in the project felt that this would make it easier for them to help their child in choosing a book. If necessary they could simply point to the book on the newsletter knowing that the shop or library were aware that the specific book had been promoted.

The newsletter also carries items written by pupils about events at school. We promoted the newsletter and asked pupils to make it their responsibility to talk to their parents about it and read it with them. Staff in school have gone through the newsletter carefully with their class and, to this point, there appears to be general enthusiasm for the initiative. All families have received a newsletter and several have expressed interest in becoming involved with the Partnership Project as a result.

Outcomes

The project is attempting to address an issue which is not solely the remit of education. It is about schools and communities working collaboratively to achieve goals collectively. It is about empowerment, self esteem and learning from each other to raise achievement.



HIGHFIELD PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

NEWSLETTER 1 JANUARY 1997

Welcome to the first Partnership Project Newsletter.

The project was set up to look at ways that parents and school can work together in partnership, to raise the achievement of children. So far we have worked with parents of children in years 5, 6 and 7. We have looked at books and the sort of work the children do in school.

Because many parents wanted to know more about the work their children were doing in school, we decided to produce a regular half termly Partnership Project Newsletter. This will have information about events happening in school, as well as recommended books which can be bought or borrowed from Keighley Library to help children to complete topic work or just extend their own knowledge.

The most fundamental impact has been on the relationship between school, parent and pupils. Staff have increased their understanding of the pupils and the kinds of language and literacy experiences they brought with them from home. Parents have become more involved with their own and their children's education both at home and school. Children have witnessed a real and growing relationship between the school and their parents and receive greater support from parents. Long term visits abroad have reduced in number and length and are more often taken across a school holiday to minimise the effect on school attendance.

The project's objectives are focused on a long term improvements in the way we work with our school community and we are intending to improve attainment for future generations of Highfield pupils as well as the current cohort.

As a result of evaluation conducted throughout the life of the project we are able to show significant, measured improvements in the quality and quantity of parental involvement and we can point to improvements in pupils' attainment. Improvements in the End of Key Stage tests are largely an outcome of an improved school focus on language and teaching skills. We also believe that improved home-school relationships has improved the context for learning generally, and in some

cases we believe that parental involvement has resulted in more rapid than average pupil progress. A large number of pupils directly involved in the Partnership Project achieved Level 4 and above.

Continuing Development

AIMS Project funding has now reduced, but the project is continuing through SRB funding for the Better Reading Partnership. Parents are invited to observe reading sessions with volunteer tutors and discuss their child's progress. Parents are invited to share a library session with their child in Year 6 English lessons. Involvement by parents in this stage of the project is very high with 80% attendance at meetings to discuss the project. Community based 'gatherings' are continuing and increasingly involve a wider network of parents and adults in the community.

KEY OUTCOMES

Parent Partnership Outcomes	Evidence
The school has a better dialogue and an improved relationship with Asian parents.	• Many more parents from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities have been involved in productive dialogue about using books and supporting children's learning.
Parents became more actively involved in their child's school education.	• Attendance at school meetings and consultations has increased significantly from 25% to 50%. • More parents come into school informally to ask questions. • Parents actively put forward suggestions about how the project can move forward. • Parents have a greater awareness of and commitment to their child's education.
Attendance has improved.	• More families appreciate the importance of attendance in raising achievement. • The number and length of visits abroad has reduced.
Parents have become more committed to their own education.	• Attendance at English classes for women at Highfield has increased by more than 100% since project began
Parents improved their knowledge and understanding about using books.	Parents learnt about: • How schools use books • How to use books with children • How to use the library and bookshops.
Library use has increased	• Pupils and parents are making increased use of the local library.
Staff knowledge and understanding improved.	Staff gained greater insight into: • The limits of pupils' home literacy experience • Parents need for information and practical support.
Pupil performance in end of key stage tests has improved:	*KS2 Tests* / *1996* / *1997* / *Improvement* English / 18% / 32% / 17% Maths / 13% / 23% / 10% Science / 14% / 44% / 27%

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DEVELOPING A FAMILY LITERACY SCHEME

PAM KHAN, WAVERLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project, Bradford Education

AIM *To improve the English of pupils and parents through the increased involvement of parents in educational activities.*

Background

Waverley is a multicultural, multilingual middle school, with approximately 700 children, almost all from an Asian background. Our primary concern is to raise educational achievement amongst our pupils. Language is fundamental to learning and underpins educational achievement in all areas of the curriculum.

We were aware of the need to improve standards in English to ensure that pupils learn effectively across the whole curriculum.

Levels of parental involvement were not very high and we had a growing belief that an effective strategy to raise standards needed to include a programme to involve parents and families more meaningfully in their children's learning. We decided to explore new opportunities for building and developing links through co-operative ventures between parents, teachers and children. We hoped that practical work with parents would improve their understanding, interest and involvement in their children's learning.

The Family Literacy Scheme is one of several strands to the school's parental involvement policy and took place in the context of a number of other Home-School Partnership in Reading initiatives.

The Home-School Reading Partnership

In addition to creating a Family Literacy Scheme we also ran a range of other linked activities as part of a Home-School Reading Partnership.

- *Home Visits and Meetings*
  For Year 5 children, raised awareness of the powerful contribution of parents to learning and reading in particular.
- *A Parents and Partners Booklet*
  Was produced by pupils as part of a Year 8 English Module. They presented it at a series of Year 5 parents' meetings.
- *Reading Diaries*
  Were introduced which have created an informative dialogue about reading strategies as well as progress.
- *Parents Workshops*
  Offered practical support and guidance on shared reading at home.
- *Paired Reading*
  Each week involves Year 7 and 8 pupils reading with Year 5 pupils.

In addition, other strategies with a more general focus also promote the home- school partnership:

- *Drop-in Sessions*
  Provide an informal and welcoming opportunity for parents and families to come into school.
- *Adult Education Classes*
  The school is used as a base for a number of well attended daytime classes organised by the college and the Home School Liaison Officer.

Family Literacy Scheme

The Family Literacy Scheme is a model promoted and funded by the Basic Skills Agency with these aims:

- To improve and develop literacy skills of parents and family members and to empower parents through various strategies to support and extend their children's learning.
- To improve and develop literacy skills of pupils and improve pupil learning and achievement.
- To provide opportunities for parent and child to work together in a supportive, structured environment.

The innovative aspect of this scheme was the way in which it provided opportunities for parents and children to work together directly in school.

Starting a Family Literacy Project

The project offered a combined programme for parents and their children. A tutor from Bradford and Ilkley Community College worked with a group of parents one afternoon each week, to improve basic skills in English, and two school Language Development Team staff worked with the children of the parents involved, concentrating on literacy skills. In addition, both parents and children worked together for part of the time with the child's work as the focus.

Whilst developing the language competence of our pupils, the school simultaneously provided the opportunity for parents to improve their English skills so that they were better able to help, support and extend their children's learning. We were also able to offer encouragement, guidance and support to parents on effective ways of doing this.

Initially, the Family Literacy Scheme was set up as a one term 'pilot' with places limited to parents of children supported by the Section 11 Language Development Team (LDT).

Developing the Family Literacy Project

The initial response was encouraging, with positive feedback from pupils and parents, and as a result of a successful bid for funding from the Basic Skills Agency, we were able to extend the pilot. We drew up a development plan, set our objectives and allocated the £2,000 grant to provide creche facilities and employ a project worker. These were our aims:

To improve links between parents and their children through:

- time spent at home in learning or reading together.
- interest shown in childrens' schoolwork.
- better understanding of how children learn in school (computers, reading scheme etc.)
- time spent together in the sessions on linked or parallel activities (e.g. book-making).

To improve links between home and school through:

- increased awareness of children's family and cultural background.
- use of parental experience and knowledge to support work being done in school.
- increased involvement of parents in school activities due to greater accessibility.
- increased involvement by other parents in the community through networking by parents involved in the project.

To increase written and oral skills of parents and their children (including younger siblings) by:

- speaking and listening, using an interpreter where necessary.
- reading and comprehension.
- writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

To empower and increase confidence of parents in terms of: mobility, social skills, independence, involvement in community life, job prospects, through:

- improved skills in English.
- supportive links with staff, especially bilingual Home School Liaison Officer.
- access to accreditation.
- educational guidance.

In the past, we sometimes believed that the best approach was to have proposals discussed and approved by the staff as a whole. In practice, this is very difficult in a big, busy school with large numbers of overworked teachers, often with differing points of view. Experience has shown that with support from Senior Management, it is far better for a few staff who are committed to the idea, to begin the process and to gradually win other staff

over, and this is precisely what happened at Waverley. It was quite simply a question of jumping in and testing the water.

In the summer term, all families of new Year 5 children were contacted by letter, inviting them into school to meet the staff involved in the Family Literacy Project and to briefly outline the nature of the scheme. This was followed by a second letter in September.

Posters were displayed in the local shops and schools and leaflets were handed out to pupils. Often, it is the pupils themselves who offer the encouragement to parents to become involved. The most effective way of involving parents and families however, was through the personal contact through home visits made by the Home School Liaison Officer and the Project Worker. We provided an information session for parents and pupils with a video and discussion to explain the aims of the scheme and to show how parents can help their children with reading and writing.

Selected Year 5 children to came to the group at regular times each week and LDT staff worked with these pupils to develop literacy skills. Initial assessments were made by school-based staff and information was gathered from class teachers to identify individual strengths and needs. Tutors from the college worked with parents to improve basic skills in English. Parents with very little or no English, work with an ESOL trained tutor, whilst others work towards a Wordpower Certificate. Children and parents worked together for part of the time with the child's work as the focus. This is the framework that we used to clarify how we were going to work in the classroom with parents and pupils:

OBJECTIVES FOR CHILDREN

- Identify their strengths and needs and to plan activities based on this assessment.
- Ensure that activities build upon the experiences, skills and cultural backgrounds of the children.
- Support and encourage the use of bilingual skills, in parallel to their successful acquisition of English.
- Clearly link the activities to the National Curriculum.

OBJECTIVES FOR PARENTS

- Break down barriers to learning.
- Build on existing skills.
- Gain a better understanding of how children learn.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE JOINT ACTIVITIES

- Encourage both parents and children to appreciate each other's work and to recognise and value each other's efforts and achievements.
- Encourage positive parent - child interaction.
- Improve confidence and self esteem by planning activities where parents or children are the experts.
- Develop speaking and listening skills and encourage parents to appreciate the importance of talking to their children.

Initially, children coming to the Family Literacy sessions brought their class work with them, but we quickly found that this was unsatisfactory and out of context for the children and led to confusion amongst parents. We needed a much clearer focus and therefore decided to adopt a topic-based approach which proved to be far more beneficial to both parents and children. We devised one programme based on 'Home and the Family' and another based on 'Games'.

Home and Family Topic

Objectives

- To instil parents' confidence in their own abilities.
- To encourage parents to appreciate the importance of talking to their children in order to further develop language skills.
- To encourage positive interaction between parent and child.

Content of Scheme of Work

- Ramadan - discussion, extended piece of writing and tape recording.
- Eid questionnaire.
- Newspaper article about Eid.
- Thinking About Me.
- Family names.
- Art work (family names).
- Family trees.
- My Family in Bradford.
- Passport.
- Extended piece of writing about a visit to relatives in another part of the country.

Games Topic

Aims

- To demonstrate how games can develop language, number and social skills.
- To help families understand that play is the means by which a child makes discoveries and learns about the world.
- To encourage parents to appreciate the important role they have to play in developing their child's learning.

Content of Scheme of Work

- Why play games?
  - Games children play
  - Games played by parents when they were children
  - Games played in Pakistan.
- Well known card and board games
  - read rules, play game, evaluate game.
- Games and skills
  - Look at one game, talk about the language and social skills needed to play the game.
  - Play other games, what are the skills needed to play them?
  - What skills are being developed?
- Make a game for a younger member of the family.

Although our objectives remained constant, it was essential to have a flexible programme, responsive to the needs of the group. It is important to avoid complacency by constantly reviewing and developing the programme to maintain interest amongst parents. It is also vital to provide a warm, welcoming and supportive environment.

Initially, both children and parents seemed to be 'stuck' around the parents' work. This reinforced an unhelpful pattern of the child as the teacher of the parent. Whilst it was important for children to know that their parents were trying to improve their skills in English, using the parents' work as the focus for the joint session seemed unproductive. For a time we suspended adult learning activities in order to encourage parents to give full attention to their child.

We also found that many parents and children, at first felt awkward working together. This was understandable since for most, it was a new experience and a new situation. We discussed with parents, the importance of listening, asking questions and showing interest. Gradually, as relationships within the group developed, parents became increasingly relaxed and confident. As their own skills and confidence grew, the 'working together' relationship between parent and child and teacher developed into a positive and stimulating partnership.

Although we had about 25 parents 'registered', we rarely had more than 18 at a session. We had two sessions every week from 9.30am to 11.30am and realised that this was a large commitment for parents. Originally, children only came to the group if their parent was present, but since at certain times parents were unable to attend because of other family commitments. This meant that their children missed the session as well. We decided therefore, to change this and children were timetabled to come to the group at certain times each week, regardless of whether their parent was present or not. This meant less confusion for parents, pupils and staff and led to far better continuity.

Finally, we found that whilst Year 5 and 6 children eagerly became involved in the Family Literacy Scheme, some Year 7 and 8 children were less enthusiastic. Although many of the older pupils did come to the group, generally speaking twelve and thirteen year olds are more inhibited, more self conscious and less inclined to want to work with their mum! Particularly, some of the older boys felt that it didn't do much for their credibility when they had to come and work with their mum or worse still, when their mum went to the classroom to work alongside them in a lesson! It also became harder to justify bringing pupils out of lessons, particularly in their final year at middle school. Consequently, there was gradual shift of emphasis towards pupils at the younger end of the school.

Evaluation

Regular evaluations were carried out with questionnaires for parents and pupils. In addition, at the end of each session, a sheet was given to encourage comments from both parents and pupils.We considered feedback to be vital and used responses to inform our future planning.

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES TO PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRES

"My mum is interested in my homework and understands more about it. She sits with me whilst I do my homework which is company for me and makes it more interesting. When I have to explain

to my mum what I am doing, it helps me to understand my school work better."

"My mum has more idea what goes on in school and she can understand more spoken English than before. I think my mum is happier and more confident since starting the Family Literacy Scheme."

"Coming to the Family Literacy Group has helped me to be more confident speaking and reading in class. I think it's good to have the chance to talk to teachers more than in class."

"It's easy work because when I write about Ramadan I just write what I feel."

OUTCOMES FOR PARENTS

- Parents work towards the Wordpower Certificate.
- Several parents have moved on and joined Adult Education classes at the college.
- Some have since embarked on Classroom Assistant courses (now held within school).
- Several parents have worked alongside children in classrooms, became involved in story-telling sessions and have listened to children read.

Conclusion

Evaluation is vital to the successful development of any scheme. There is immense pressure on schools to justify themselves through concrete evidence in facts and figures. In this type of project it is very difficult to measure the precise impact on children, parents and staff. Some things are impossible to quantify, especially when there are a range of linked activites aimed at raising achievement taking place simultaneously. The range of variables is too large and complex to isolate one particualr factor. It is impossible to attribute school improvement in the end of Key Stage 2 tests to the Family Literacy Scheme. At the same time, we believe that the benefits of increased involvement of parents are reflected in these improvements.

Between the ages of 5 and 16, approximately 15% of a child's waking time is spent in school. Nevertheless, many staff remain sceptical of the value of schemes aimed at involving parents, and consider that the relatively small numbers of parents involved is a 'drop in the ocean' and makes little impact.

A longer term view is necessary. Home-School partnerships have to be established at a pace which is appropriate for the achool and parents and the effect is a gradual one and the impact is not always felt immediately.

Benefits of Home-School Partnerships

- Maximise children's learning and achievement by extending the contexts of learning beyond the classroom.
- Improve communication between home and school by creating an effective flow of information, in both directions. This leads to a far greater understanding of the school and what it is trying to achieve and helps parents to understand how they can support their children's learning.

Benefits to parents from the Family Literacy Scheme

- Positive group relationships promoted a significant change in attitude towards working with their children.
- Increased knowledge and skill raised parents' self esteem and they became not only increasingly confident about supporting and exteding their children's learning, but their own as well.
- Parents felt more satisfied by the school as it was meeting their needs and providing support and encouragement.

Benefits for Pupils

- Increased attention led to improved motivation and enthusiasm for learning.
- Well planned and structured acitivites were appropriate to their assessed literacy needs.
- They enjoyed working closely with a parent.
- Increased work at home led to more time spent on learning.

The literacy work with parents and pupils is continuing to develop and grow. We are currently developing a simplified reading continuum for parents and pupils, based on the National Curriculum and the 'First Steps' resources. Our aim is to continue to give practical help to parents by providing clear information and guidance on reading which will help them to support the development of their child's reading at home.

KEY OUTCOMES

Objectives	Target	Outcome
Improved links between parents and children	• More time spent at home learning together or reading. • More interest in schoolwork. • Better understanding of how children learn.	• Positive feedback, especially on Ramadan Topic. • Positive feedback from parents. • Parents have used: Wellington Square, cassette recorders, computers and have visited a library.
Improved links between home and school	• Increased awareness of family and cultural background. • Increased use of parental knowledge and skill. • Increased involvement of parents in school. • Extended range of parents involved with school.	• Teachers involved are far better informed and have a much closer relationship with families. • Some parents have translated schoolwork into Urdu, have helped in classrooms and worked with their children in the parents' group. • Work on Ramadan and Eid was particularly successful in enabling parents to apply knowledge and talk confidently. • Some are more willing to work in classrooms; one worked as a support assistant; one helped with reading and maths; another was involved in storytelling; and one listens to readers. • Several new parents have enquired about and joined the parents' group.
Increased social confidence	• Language skills and access to accreditation. • Educational guidance. • Links with school.	• Parents work towards the Wordpower Certificate. • Several parents have moved on and joined Adult Education classes at the college. • Some have since embarked on Classroom Assistant courses (now held within school). • Several parents have worked alongside children in classrooms, become involved in story-telling sessions and have listened to children read.
Higher pupil attainment	• Improved performance in end of Key Stage tests.	KS2 Tests in English L4+ • 1996 27% • 1997 41%

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BRADFORD year of LITERACY 2007-2008

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ASSESSING AND IMPROVING 'TOTAL COMMUNICATION'

ZAHIDA ALAM AND GILL BENZINSKI, WEDGWOOD SPECIAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NURSERY

AIM *To improve the interpretation of communication and pupils' own communication skills.*

The Makaton sign for 'biscuit'

Introduction

Wedgwood School caters for children aged 2-11 years who have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and severe learning difficulties (SLD). The school also has a 30:30 place mainstream nursery attached, into which some children with special needs are integrated on a full-time basis. Of the 60 children on the school roll, approximately 40% come from homes where English is not the first language and approximately one third of the pupils are not exposed to spoken English at home. The languages spoken by the pupils' families are Urdu and Punjabi. It is a school which encompasses a wide and diverse range of needs in both educational and cultural terms.

Communication for children with PMLD, as you can imagine, is a great challenge. Ability to communicate effectively varies a great deal according to the individual, and pupils may need a great deal of help, understanding and careful observation to get their message across. All the children communicate in some way or other, even if it is only through crying or laughing. The challenge for children who do not hear English at home is even greater. We decided that our research would focus on how we can interpret and develop the communication skills of the children, especially bilingual learners.

Two small scale action research activities were set up. These were:

- Assessing the extent to which PMLD children are bilingual.
- Improving pupil/pupil communication in the home corner/role play area of the Community Nursery.

Assessing Bilingualism In Pupils With Profound And Multiple Learning Difficulties

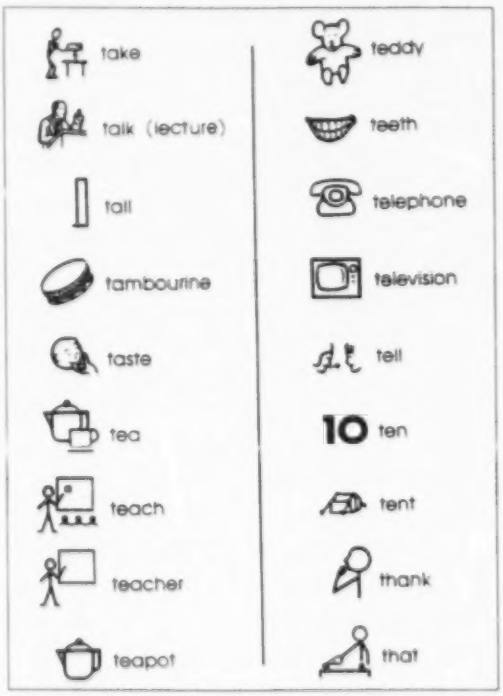
Zahida Alam

Communication with all pupils with PMLD is problematic. Many pupils have visual, hearing and speech impairment. In addition, the majority of the pupils also have physical disabilities which hinders communication even more.

A large proportion of the pupils are unable to communicate verbally and staff have to rely upon methods of 'interpretation', whereby the facial expressions, sounds and gestures are analysed and interpreted. Only a small proportion of the pupils are able to make gestures in response to interactions. As far as

possible. staff encourage the pupils to use these responses consistently in order to give the pupils some control over their environment.

For pupils at Wedgwood School, the mastery of any language or form of communication is vital. Linguistic diversity does not just include different home languages. For example, within school pupils and staff use of sign language (Makaton), symbols (Rebus), tactile forms of communication, (known as 'objects of reference'), expression and vocalisation, (which may or may not be words), and the use of switches and technological aides. The consistent and planned use of this range of communication strategies is known as 'Total Communication'.



Rebus symbols

The purpose of the research was to:

- work with a small group of bilingual pupils to assess their ability in and use of their home language.
- identify strategies which might improve provision for pupils from backgrounds where English is not the first language.

My initial research questions were:

- Does the child respond to spoken English ?
- What form does this take (verbal/non-verbal) ?
- Does the child respond differently when spoken to in the home language e.g. Urdu/Punjabi?
- What form does this take (verbal/non-verbal) ?

I decided to compare the pupil's responses in English and in their home language in order to assess the extent of their bilingualism. Due to the severity and complexity of the pupils' difficulties, I needed to have some knowledge of the type of non-verbal language they usually used, such as signing, gesturing or eye pointing. Having acquired this information, I hoped be able to identify some strategies that would help enhance the bilingual aspects of communication throughout the school.

I focused on 3 pupils whose home language is Punjabi. Their names have been changed.

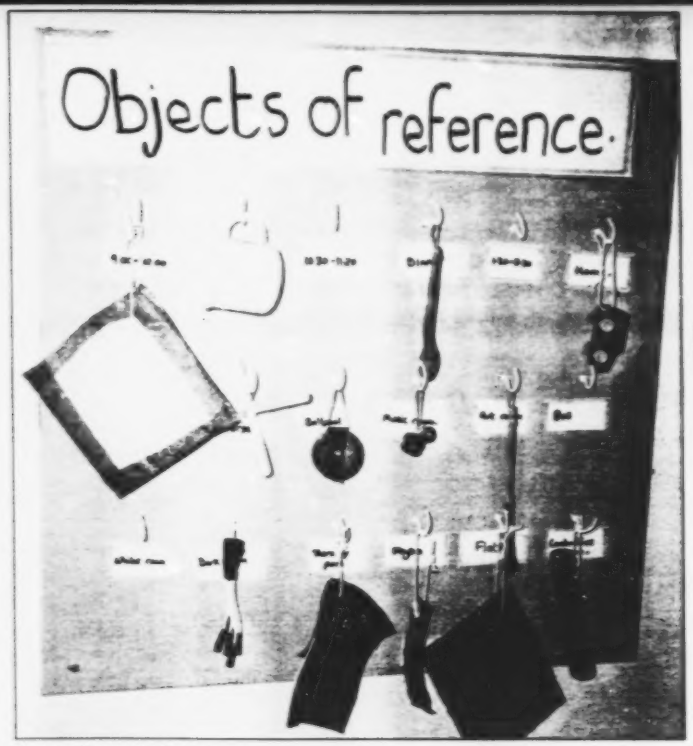
- Sofia is eight years old and is severely mentally delayed. She is physically able.
- Imran is eleven years old and is also developmentally delayed. Imran has additional physical disabilities and uses a wheelchair.
- Shama is four years old and has spina bifida and as a result is severely mentally and physically delayed.

I used the following methods to gather evidence:

- Staff interviews to compare my own perceptions with those of the class teacher.
- Classroom observations of Chinese New Year celebration, colour matching and language development and conversation.
- Video recordings of activity in the sensori-stimulation room and at the feeding/lunchtime session to make a permanent record of the pupil's behaviour and to enable me to observe my own teaching approach.
- Parent/carer interviews were used as the final research activity to compare evidence gathered in school with the views of parents, and to gain further information about the pupils' bilingual skills.

RESULTS

Professional and parental opinions both clearly indicated that understanding in English and Punjabi is at approximately the same level. The pupils have some understanding of both languages. Evidence from interviews and observations showed understanding and appropriateness of response in both languages. Pupils understood key words in both languages, for example, names of objects and



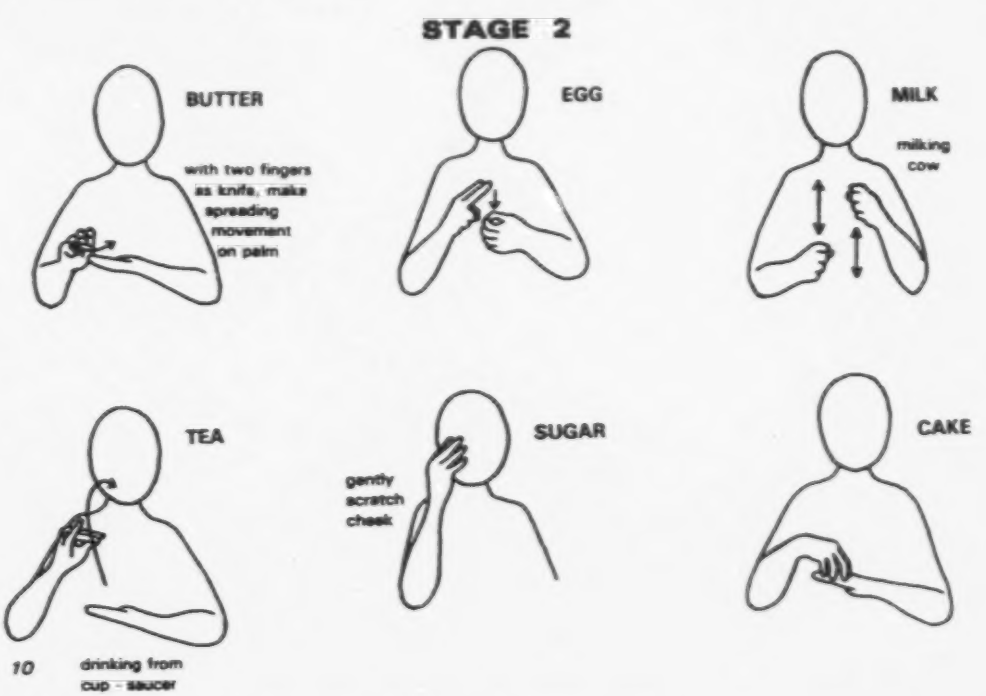
Tactile objects of reference

people. One very interesting factor which emerged from the research was that Makaton sign language was the common link between home and school and seemed to bridge the two languages. It was used consistently by physically able pupils at home and school.

The research demonstrated the bilingual ability of these pupils and the useful role played by Makaton. These tentative conclusions are based on a very small sample of pupils. On the basis of this research and my experience as a bilingual member of staff I suggest the following strategies for enhancing provision for bilingual pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties:

STRATEGIES

- A policy on bilingual teaching should be drawn up as part of the school's commitment to 'Total Communication for all'. This could help to clarify and formalise bilingual teaching in school.
- Parental involvement in bilingual teaching would create an excellent opportunity to involve parents in their children's education.
- A list of key words in the home language in all classrooms would enable monolingual staff to increase and improve their communication with bilingual pupils.
- Regular Makaton training for parents would enhance communication for pupils and provide consistency between home and school.



The Makaton vocabulary uses signs, facial expression, directionality and accompanies speech

Improving pupil - pupil communication in the home corner/role play area of the Community Nursery.

Gill Benzinski

The home corner / role play area should provide the children with a rich and stimulating environment which fosters and develops pupils' language. We were concerned that the level of interactions and the purposefulness of play in the home corner / role play area of the nursery was not promoting pupils language development but we were unclear about the precise reasons.

For the AIMS Project we set ourselves the following question:

- In what way can we sustain and improve pupil - pupil communications in the home corner / role play area?

We decided to carry out a research exercise to clarify patterns of behaviour in the home corner / role play area. From our observations we hoped to identify key issues and plan a strategy for tackling them. We planned to evaluate the success of our development actions by carrying out a second set of observations.

Initially, live and video observations were made and evidence was gathered and analysed around these questions:

- How many children were in the home corner?
- Which children were in and what length of time did they stay?
- What level of play were the children engaged in?
- How well did the children interact with one another, verbally or through play?

RESULTS

- The home corner / role play area was treated by many children as a 'stopping off' area where they entered, looked out of the window and exited without engaging in any type of play.
- Numbers frequently rose to as many as eight children at any one time, allowing it to become over populated. Interactions became non-existent apart from those children in a dominant role.
- Older children clearly dominated the home corner / role play area and controlled entry. Younger, more passive children rarely got an opportunity to enter.
- A number of children used alternative entry points other than the doorway as main entry. Low cupboards were used as dividers which the children could climb over.

- Equipment in the area was used inappropriately for example, the table and chairs were used to barricade younger children out.
- Language was used at a variety of different levels but too often it was used to dominate others by shouting.
- Very little co-operative play occurred unless there were fewer than three children in.

From these findings the nursery team devised a list of recommendations to improve pupil-pupil interaction in the home corner/role play area. From our analysis we concluded that we needed to improve social interactions between the pupils in order to promote better communication and more productive language.

ACTIONS

- The home corner/role play area was relocated away from the window.
- A new frame for the home corner/role play area was purchased to clearly define boundaries and entry and exit points.
- Equipment was limited to avoid inappropriate usage.
- We set a limit of 2 children at any one time.
- Planned adult involvement in the home corner/role play area was used to develop turn-taking and co-operative play skills in addition to supporting and extending learning.
- Children's interest in the area was sustained by changing resources monthly.
- MAKATON was used with children who have language and learning difficulties to aid their comprehension and support their learning in the home corner/role play area.

These actions were carried out within two months and the children were allowed a month to settle in to their new environment before a second set of observations took place.

Evaluation

The nursery team were very satisfied with the results of the second set of observations which clearly demonstrated a huge improvement in pupils' learning behaviour and responses.

The improvements were:-

- Play in the home corner/role play area was far more imaginative and co-operative with very few disputes.
- The smaller number of children eradicated arguments about who was in charge.
- The children took on roles more readily and frequently, for example, mummy, daddy, baby. Much more imaginative language was in operation.
- The enclosure of the area seemed to give some children more confidence to act out specific roles.
- The resources provided were being used much more appropriately and imaginatively.
- Because it became a quieter area with less distractions children sat and looked at the books in the home corner a great deal more frequently.
- Children with special needs had good peer models and were more frequently seen playing in the role play area.

Conclusion

The nursery team were very pleased with the outcomes of this research. The area clearly needed to be developed as it was providing very little constructive play opportunities. By observing, analysing and reflecting collaboratively it was far easier to clearly identify what was wrong and what we could do to improve this.

In order to sustain these improvements we realised that an adult role model was critically important. We decided to make the home corner/role play area a focus for adult input on a regular basis, particularly at the start of each term when new children would be arriving and existing children might just need the rules reinforcing.

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KEY OUTCOMES

Ressearch Questions	Pre-project	Post-project
To what extent are pupils with PMLD bilingual?	Staff were unclear about the extent and use of pupils' home language. The school has started to develop a 'Total Communication' policy involving therapists, nursing and teaching staff as well as parents and carers.	The school is more aware of the role of pupils' home language. Policy proposals have been put forward to integrate bilingualism within the school's developing approach to 'Total Communication'. The key role of Makaton as a bridge between home and school has been reinforced.
How can we improve pupil -pupil communication in the home corner / role play area?	The home / role play corner did not adequately promote play or language development. The home / role play area lacked clear boundaries and structure. Pupil interaction was low level and lacked imagination.	The home / role play area was relocated and restructured. Adults set limits, modelled role play and taught turn-taking and co-operative skills. Pupils' play gained concentration and was more sustained and developed. Pupils used more imaginative language in role play and used books more frequently and purposefully.

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

This case study was edited by Bernard Campbell and is one of a series produced by the Achievement in Multilingual Schools Project.
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IMPROVING ORACY

YASMIN ALI AND KAREN WESTCOTT, WHETLEY FIRST SCHOOL

AIM *To develop pupils' oral skills to deal with the language and concepts of the curriculum*

Background

Whetley First School is an inner-city school with a school population comprised predominantly of children whose origins lie in the Mirpuri district of Pakistan. Although there is a trend towards increasing competence in English on entry to school, a majority of children still arrive in the nursery with little English. We were concerned that the English language skills of pupils were insufficiently developed to deal with the demands of the curriculum. The school has ten bilingual staff which has contributed to the range and effectiveness of strategies for improving oracy.

Inspiration from Schools in Amsterdam

Through a European school links programme, Developing Intercultural Education through Co-operation between European Cities (DIECEC), the Headteacher visited a number of Amsterdam schools with high achieving ethnic minority pupils. These Amsterdam schools had a similar socio-economic context and a similar proportion of ethnic minority pupils. The significant difference was the high academic achievement of the Amsterdam pupils in a deprived urban environment. Schools in Bradford and Amsterdam both have a national curriculum but in the Netherlands the national curriculum gives a high priority to the core subjects, particularly in the early years.

The Amsterdam school suggested that key ingredients for their success included the following:

- Close links between school and parents.
- Regular monitoring of pupil performance.
- Focus on oracy in the early years.
- Structured and detailed curriculum planning and organisation with a strong accent on talk.
- A literacy curriculum focused on subject vocabulary and comprehension.
- Small teaching groups in the first language to reinforce key learning previously experienced in a second language.

Planning Oracy

As a result of discussing this visit the school decided to focus on oracy for the school AIMS Project. We also decided to follow the Amsterdam example and focus on the core

subjects. The breadth of the curriculum had to be modified in order to pay greater attention to the depth. Work in the core subjects was undertaken over a longer period which also provided time to extend and consolidate learning through talk.

We initially focused on the following questions:

- What do we mean by oracy?
- How can we accommodate it in an already crowded curriculum?
- How can we monitor it? (Speaking and Listening has always been the most difficult to assess).
- Will our assessment be useful in our day to day classroom situation.
- Will an emphasis on oracy improve achievement?

"Learning to Learn in a Second Language", by Pauline Gibbons (Primary English Teaching Association, Australia), provided us with a framework for planning oracy. Pauline Gibbons highlights the different language functions that a child needs to develop if it is to communicate effectively as an adult, and we matched these to the National Curriculum requirements in each subject and key stage. This was summarised in a planning sheet which highlighted the language functions to be taught to each year group. This planning sheet was used to inform and monitor our long term planning.

Whetley First School Year 2	Language Functions
Classifying	Sorting : Which things go together? Why? How are things alike, similar, different
Comparing	Physical attributes: quantity, size, shape (comparative - bigger than, biggest, etc)
Giving/Following Instructions	Giving instructions to others. Following instructions to carry out task successfully
Describing	Building on the use of adjectives and adverbs. Setting scene in story; position. Characters: emotions, physical description
Questioning	Questions pertinent to task, to develop learning and understanding
Evaluating	Talking about positives and negatives. How things might be improved.
Performing	Participating in drama activities. Puppet theatre, role play, reading aloud, singing, storyboard. Encouraging: fluent, confident speech and audience awareness.
Explaining	Explaining why something occurs with reasons. Giving reasons for likes / dislikes / opinions.
Hypothesising	Cause and effect. Maths ,Science, "What do you think would happen if?" (If.. then..) Proj. into the unknown
Planning/ predicting	Planning - organisation of thoughts & equipment. Predicting- contextual based. What will happen next? Present continuous(I am going to) / Future tense (I will be)
Reporting	Retelling. Giving an account of an experience (past tense) Feeding back of task and information
Sequencing	Through pictures, stories, songs, poems, events. (conactives)
Expressing Understanding	Comprehension : being able to deal with inference and deduction. Generalisations.

We ensured that oral and written language were included within the objectives and activities planned for teaching National Curriculum subjects. We identified the language structures and phrases to be modelled, taught and practised orally and listed the key technical subject vocabulary which pupils needed to understand and explain orally. Our short term planning sheets were modified so that the use of language was

Whetley First School Short Term Planning Year 2 Week

Topic / Subject Area English | **Language Function :** Sequencing

Learning Objectives	Activities	Language Structures	Vocabulary
To develop children's ability to sequence a story. To reinforce story vocab and high frequency words. To develop connectives	① Children to order set of pictures relating to Jack + Beanstalk. ② Work in pairs and orally retell story to friend using pictures. ③ A) Children to match sentence to appropriate pic. B) children to dictate sentence for pic. c) children to write own sentence	First ... then ... next ... afterwards, finally. Once upon a time ... What happened next? pirr kay ohyah see? What happened at the end? Arkharr kay ohyah see? What did (Jack) do? (Jack) kay kitar see?	Jack Beanstalk / tali Cow gaan mother/ amee huge babarra Gold / sawna Hen / cookree money / pessay harp / sitar jaysee Giant / dayo wife / beewee Climb / upper charya axe / kwaree chop / browree
Who	**Resources**		
All children to attempt work. For differentiated groups see overleaf.	Stories in sequence book. Differentiated sentences pictures.		

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highlighted as an integral part of subject teaching. Key language structures and some vocabulary were also identified in the pupils' home language in order to reinforce understanding of concepts, processes and relationships. (See "Bilingual Issues")

Changing teaching strategies

As a result of planning oral and written language into subject teaching we reviewed our teaching strategies. We realised that our past emphasis on producing written work at the expense of using talk sometimes limited the quality of teaching and learning in these key ways:

- In order to ensure that children were on task we tended to provide pen and paper activities because they were easier to monitor and produced tangible results. At the same time we were aware that the emphasis on written outcomes did not necessarily provide sufficient support for learning or indicate a child's capabilities.
- We looked back at our previous planning and realised that we had often rushed from the introduction of an idea to a concluding task. Where was the time and opportunity for exploration and consolidation?
- We were anxious about the lack of immediate evidence of learning outcomes following a talk session and we were unsure about the role of talk in subject teaching, assessment and learning.

We examined our teaching methodology to see how we could raise the standard of children's work through quality talk sessions.

Developing more precise and explicit teaching objectives

We realised that in a single session our anticipated learning outcome was often a longer term aim rather than a precise objective. For example, the teaching aim "Make a circuit and describe how it works" needed to be broken down into more specific sequence of teaching objectives:

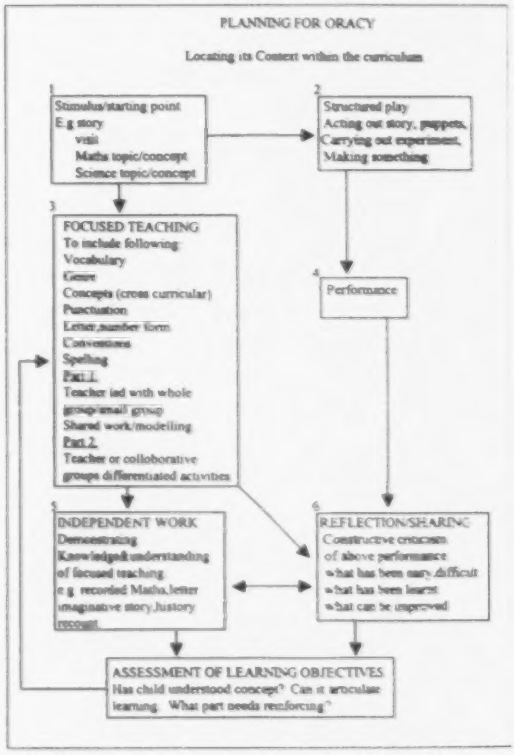
Lesson 1: Can you make the lamp light?

Lesson 2: Labelling the components.

Lesson 3: Use the correct structures and vocabulary to describe how to make the lamp light.

We decided to move from implicit to explicit teaching. We needed to be clear to ourselves and the children about the concept we were teaching and what the pupils were expected to learn. In addition, we needed to make explicit the English structures and key vocabulary that we would model and expect them to use.

We also decided that our lesson planning needed to include three elements: an introduction, main content and conclusion. We have devised the following diagram to help us ensure that planning for oracy is related to the stages of learning within a topic or lesson and is focused on the language of the subject. Using this planning chart helps us to ensure an adequate range and variety of learning activities for teaching subjects and topics and to consider appropriate groupings of pupils for different tasks.



Within this framework we are seeking to move children from understanding procedures to understanding meaning. Instead of pupils' learning being dependent on following rules and completing tasks we want pupils to be independent and express their learning in their own words and apply it in new circumstances and situations.

Assessment

We already had assessment in place in most of the curriculum areas and we did not want to add to our workload. Our solution was to

combine the oracy and subject assessment so that each assessment had a dual purpose. In order to assess if the concept has been understood pupils have to articulate the learning that had taken place. It is not sufficient to name the target vocabulary. They have to use vocabulary and phrases in a way that demonstrates their understanding. This assessment is easier when the planned learning outcomes are specific.

Oracy assessment

Name : **Date:**

Type of talk	***Use of targeted language.***
Context: Lang. Assess: The children have been learning about electricity over half a term. Specific vocabulary has been introduced to the children and they have been encouraged to use it in context. Science Assess: Can describe how circuit is constructed + what is needed to make bulb light up	

Vocabulary to be assessed		***L1***	***L2***
bulb	first		
wire	then		
bulb holder	next		
battery	after		
battery holder	switches		
crocodile clips	plugs		
circuit	wire		
connect	sockets		
plastic			
metal			

Because we have a much clearer focus on subject and language learning objectives it is possible to discern if it is the concept or lack of vocabulary or expression that was the problem. Subsequently, we may choose to either reinforce the concept in the child's first language or provide further opportunities to practise the targeted language in English. These assessments are adequate for the majority of children but on occasions we needed to carry out further diagnostic assessments to understand a child's linguistic skills and behaviour more clearly.

Pauline Gibbons' analysis of coping strategies used by pupils acquiring a second language helped us to devise a useful assessment strategy for identifying types of language development need. An awareness of the ways in which bilingual learners restrict themselves to familiar, simple, accurate language meant that we could immediately relate to a large number of children whose difficulties with more complex English were not immediately obvious or understood by teachers.

Speaking and Listening Diagnostic Checklist

Listening

- has difficulty following a series on instructions.
- has a short concentration span, especially if the topic is unfamiliar.
- appears to have difficulty predicting what is about to be said.
- does not understand key words which alter meaning, such as *although, however, except, unless*, etc.
- has trouble distinguishing certain sounds.

Speaking

- has quite good oral language, and has mastered slang and playground language.
- finds it difficult to adjust register, and may sound impolite in formal situations with adults.
- uses language that is 'known' and therefore often says the same thing, for example, in 'newstime'.
- makes mistakes with basic sentence structures, for example, *'you told me where is it'*.
- makes grammatical mistakes not typical of an English speaker, such as mistakes in tense or with prepositions.
- appears to have difficulty sequencing thoughts.

As a result of making assessments using this checklist, we are able to carry out, where necessary, more analytical tests on a small number of targeted children.

Bilingual Issues

The Amsterdam model used Dutch as the language of instruction with reinforcement later provided in the child's first language in a separate session. This was not applicable to our situation where staff mainly use English as the language of instruction with some examples of staff using a bilingual approach.

It is important in our planning of oral and written language to distinguish between concepts which require language to express understanding of ideas, and factual knowledge which requires the naming and use of appropriate vocabulary. We aim to carry out assessments that measure a child's understanding of the subject, not just their literal competence in English. Our bilingual policy aims to improve understanding. We have developed a bank of key phrases and technical language, mainly in Punjabi and Urdu, which are accessible to monolingual teachers through transliteration. We are able to use them as an integral part of our planning to support concept development or to provide a context for the new language being taught

If a child is clear about the concept and is familiar with it, then it will be easier for them to learn the related English or relate the English to it. The use of a child's first language assists conceptual development. Our dual language approach has a clear purpose and has acquired high status through being of real use. This has developed further still with the use of homework sheets which encourage parents to talk about what their child has learnt in school, particularly in their home language. Assessment in both languages provides a clear indication of what a child knows and understands and helps to demonstrate how competently they can articulate their learning in English. Such assessments have shown that some children operate at a very early stage of development in both languages and have subsequently been placed on an SEN programme.

If a monolingual teacher has access to the key phrases and vocabulary in Punjabi or Urdu it is easier to monitor whether a child is focused on the task during an oral session. The teacher just needs to listen for evidence of the targeted vocabulary in any language.

What have we achieved?

Language learning is now promoted in all areas of the curriculum throughout the school and is demonstrated through a whole school approach to teachers' planning which places oracy at the heart of all learning. Our classroom practice relates to the language needs of pupils, as identified through our formative assessment procedures. All staff have increased their knowledge of the role of oracy in learning and, within this, the part played by the child's home language. The school and classroom environment provides a good model of oral language in both English and the child's home language, where possible.

Teachers have developed a shared understanding about language and literacy development and have had opportunities to explore the teaching and learning issues implicit in second language development. We have all raised our expectations of what pupils can achieve in response to their improved standards of reading and writing.

Children are demonstrating increased confidence in their use of English for academic as well as social purposes and are becoming independent learners by being taught how to access sources of information and language support in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning by engaging in shared reading and writing activities and collaborative group work.

The value we have placed on the language of home as well as English, has strengthened our partnership with parents and has encouraged the active involvement of parents in their child's learning and literacy development both in school and at home.

OFSTED REPORT 1996

Overall, attainment in English is below national expectation. By the time they reach Year 4, however, the great majority of pupils have made sound and steady progress, especially in spoken English and reading. They have moved a considerable way towards closing the gap on national norms and the highest attaining pupils exceed them. Given that so many pupils have to learn English as an additional language this is a creditable achievement on the part of the school. The results of the latest national tests, moreover, show an improving picture which indicates that the pace of progress is improving.

The school rightly gives the highest priority to teaching spoken English effectively from the earliest stage. This is reflected in the decision to promote spoken English by devoting additional resources to it through the 'AIMS Project'. A strong and very positive contribution to the teaching of all aspects of English is also provided by Section 11 teachers and teaching assistants. All the classes receive substantial help with the teaching of English from these adults, in addition to that of the class teacher.

At best, the teaching of English is very good. In Year 2, for example, the close co-operation between the class teachers, including the Section 11 teachers, results in a well planned programme of work for pupils of all levels of attainment and covers all aspects of English. The teaching of reading and writing is demanding. Serious attention is given, for example, to developing the pupil's knowledge of grammar, punctuation and their awareness of phonics, as well as writing skills, often by teaching the whole class together in lively sessions based on familiar stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Opportunities are provided for dramatising stories through the use of puppets and making plays for school assemblies. Poetry is included in topics, such as poems about weather in science studies.

KEY OUTCOMES

Oracy	Teaching Outcomes	Learning Outcomes
Subject Knowledge	Teachers have a greater awareness of the language functions, structures and technical vocabulary that need to be developed at each key stage. This is demonstrated in teachers' planning sheets.	The target language is used by pupils.
Planning	Planning has specific intended learning objectives, with small steps to ensure that at each stage we provide appropriate teaching support and assessment.	Children regularly receive information about the intended learning, the structures and the vocabulary that comprise the lesson.
Assessment	Teachers are more skilled at analysing children's talk and in using the analysis to identify linguistic competence.	Analytical assessment of targeted children has provided greater insights into their language needs. The range of pupil needs is catered for in a more structured and effective way.
Technical Language	More teachers make selective use of phrases and key words from the child's first language to support understanding, particularly of English technical language. Code switching is encouraged by children and staff.	We have noticed an increase in the correct usage of technical vocabulary by children in all subjects and year groups.
Attainment	Many school factors have helped to raise attainment, of which the AIMS Project is one.	Pupil attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved significantly over the life of the AIMS Project. English and Maths 1995 L2+ 53% 1997 L2+ 86%

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BRADFORD year of LITERACY 1997-1998

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TEACHING AND LESSON STRUCTURE

Successful literacy teaching demonstrates a systematic approach to the teaching of year groups, attainment groups and individuals. Literacy objectives are defined in terms of what pupils can do, know and understand and literacy learning is specified in small steps. Teaching focuses on improving learning behaviours which promote pupils' independence in reading, writing and speaking. The most successful teaching is often characterised by a high level of detailed planning of sequences of activity within a lesson, based around well developed notions of the beginning, middle and end of a lesson.

In these case studies teachers are explicit about the language and literacy skills they are teaching. This does not lead to a narrowing of the curriculum. The case studies demonstrate a commitment to promoting pupils' independence as learners and the development of pupils' personal and intellectual response in reading and writing. This enthusiasm for individual creativity in learning it is most apparent in the arts focused projects, but is also fostered in other learning contexts where literacy objectives are in the foreground.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Teachers in these successful schools collaborate regularly to plan and review the implementation of new strategies, and they have begun to develop methods for setting targets and evaluating outcomes. They analyse and use information from a range of standardised assessment data which they link with a more detailed, qualitative evaluation of specific strategies and objectives. They are able to explain how their teaching of literacy has changed and they can detail specific improvements in pupils' linguistic competence and approach to learning.

BERNARD CAMPBELL AND CHRISTINE HALSALL

AIMS Project Managers

Bradford Education, 1997

BRADFORD
year of
LITERACY
1997-1998

The AIMS courses are highly regarded and have had considerable impact on individuals' development. Ideas are being explored and trialed and influencing a wider group of staff.
First School

As a result of courses we have developed and incorporated work on the Reading Hour, Storytelling, Writing Frames and "First Steps".
First School

Courses have raised staff awareness, improved knowledge, introduced new ideas and initiatives, stimulated formal and informal discussion, and created an atmosphere of trust between schools allowing ideas and resources to be shared.
First School

Courses and conferences relevant, practical and encouraging. We are more confident about knowledge and skills in language development and meeting the needs of pupils.
Middle School

Increased awareness of processes involved in reading and learning. Less focus on content, more on skills. More use of writing frames. Greater staff motivation.
Middle School

The in-house training programme has given us the necessary theoretical background to literacy learning and has given us practical skills in monitoring and modelling reading behaviour.
Upper School

Cover design inspired by Salma Patel, Westbourne First School, Bradford.

BRADFORD

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